Mundane virtue
Christian virtue
Divine virtue
Social virtue

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Christian virtue
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Social virtue

E. 6. 83

THE Christian Life.

PART I.

From its

BEGINNING,

TO ITS

CONSUMMATION

In GLORY;

TOGETHER, WITH

The several Means and Instruments of Christianity conducing thereunto;

WITH

Directions for private Devotion,

AND

Forms of PRAYER

Fitted to the several States of Christians.

By *JOHN SCOTT*, D.D. Rector of St. *Peter Poor*, London.

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To the Right Honourable
AND
Right Reverend Father in God,
H E N R Y
Lord Biſhop of LONDON,
And one of his Majeſties moſt Honourable Privy-Council, *&c.*

My Lord,

THAT *I preſume to lay theſe Papers at your Lordſhips feet, is not becauſe I imagine they* deſerve, *but becauſe I am Conſcious they* need *ſo great a Patronage. Not but that, were the Diſcourſes they contain as great and meritorious as their Argument, they might ſafely ſhelter themſelves under their own Deſerts, and challenge* Homage *inſtead of begging* Protection; *but though I have done my beſt*

Endeavour to treat this great Theme ſuitably to its own native Majeſty, yet I am very ſenſible it hath not eſcaped the too common Fate of all ſuch ſublime and excellent Subjects, which is to be foul'd and ſullied by courſe handling. But my lot falling in this unhappy Age, wherein the beſt Church *and* Religion *in the World are in ſuch apparent Danger of being Crucified, like their bleſſed Author, between thoſe two Thieves* (*and both, alas, impenitent ones*) Superſtition *and* Enthuſiaſm, *I thought my ſelf obliged not to ſit ſtill as an unconcerned Spectator of the* Tragedy, *but in my little Sphere, and according to my poor Ability, to indeavour its Prevention: And conſidering that the moſt effectual Means the* Romaniſts *have uſed to ſubvert* this *Church, which they ſo much* envy, *and all the Reformations do ſo much* admire *and* depend *on, hath been to* divide *her own Children from her, and* arm *them againſt her, by ſtarting new Opinions among them, and ingaging*

ingaging their Zeal (which was wont to be imployed to better Purpoſes) in hot Diſputes about the Modes *and* Circumſtances *of her Worſhip; I thought a Diſcourſe of the* Chriſtian Life, *which is the proper Sphere of Chriſtian* Zeal, *might be a good Expedient to take men off from thoſe dangerous* Contentions *which were* kindled *and are* fed *and* blown *by ſuch as deſign our common Ruine. For ſure did our People throughly underſtand what 'tis to be Chriſtians* indeed, *and how much Duty that implies, they could never find ſo much Leiſure as they do to quarrel and wrangle about* Trifles.

This, my Lord, is the ſincere Deſign of what I here preſent to your Lordſhip; and however it may ſucceed, *I have this Satisfaction that I* meant well, *and have expreſt my Good Will to this poor* envied *Church, whoſe truly Primitive Conſtitution, pure & undefiled Religion, I ſhall always admire and reverence; and whatſoever her Fate may be, I am chain'd*

to her Fortunes by my Reaſon *and* Conſcience, *and ſhall ever eſteem it more eligible to be cruſht by her Fall, which God avert, than to flouriſh and triumph on her Ruines.*

But among the many *ill Omens that threaten our Church, there is* one *which ſeems to preſage its Proſperity; and that is, that ſuch Eminent Stations in it as your Lordſhips, are ſo excellently ſupplied. For although whether the Part you are deſigned for, be to grace her* Triumphs *or her* Funeral, *is known only to the ſoveraign Diſpoſer of Events; yet this,* my Lord, *all that wiſh well to our Church conclude, that God beſtow'd* You *upon her as a Token of Love. For which they have ſufficient Warrant even from the daily Experience they have of the Prudence and Vigilance of your Government, the Piety, Integrity, and Generoſity of your Temper, of your invincible Loyalty to your Prince, your undaunted Zeal for the Reformed Religion,*

ligion, and your grave and obliging Deportment towards all you converſe with. I ſhall trouble your Lordſhip no farther, but conclude this Addreſs with that which I am ſure is the hearty Prayer of all your honeſt Clergy, that the God of Heaven would long continue your Lordſhip a Bleſſing to the Church, and to this Dioceſe, an Honour to your Sacred Order, and the Noble Stock you deſcend from; and if what I here preſent prove but ſo proſperous as to do ſome good in the World, and obtain your Lordſhip's Acceptance, it will be a noble Compenſation of this well-meant Endeavour. I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt Humble and moſt Obedient Servant,

JOHN SCOTT.

THE

PREFACE.

I SHALL not trouble the Reader with a long Apology for the Publication of the enſuing Treatiſe, though I might plead (as other Authors do) the Importunity of Friends, whoſe Judgments I very much reverence. For, to ſay the Truth, I do by no means think that in an Affair of this Nature it is *ſafe* or *fit* for a man to be over-born by the perſwaſions of thoſe whoſe *Judgments* he hath juſt cauſe to ſuſpect may be brib'd by their *Friendſhips*. And therefore had I not hoped that in ſuch an Age as this, (wherein through our own *Diviſions* and *Debaucheries*, both in *Opinion* and *Practice*, and the helliſh Contrivances of our *Enemies*, we have ſuch a diſmal Proſpect of things before us) theſe Papers might be of ſome *Uſe* to Religion and the Souls of men, I would never have troubled the World with them; but hoping they might, I have ventured upon that reaſon to publiſh them.

I have for ſome years been a ſorrowful Spectator of the black Cloud that is gathering over my Native Country, and I muſt confeſs have nôt been without my ſhare of the *Fears* and *Anxieties* of the Age; but being at laſt quite ſick of looking *downwards* upon this uncomfortable Scene of things, I had no other way to relieve my oppreſſed Thoughts, but to raiſe them above this miſerable World, and entertain them with the *Comforts* of Religion, and the *Hopes* of a better State beyond the Grave; wherein, I thank God, I have found ſuch *Reſt* and *Satisfaction* of Mind as rendered my blackeſt Apprehenſions of the enſuing Storm very *tolerable*. And now becauſe I would not eat my Morſel *alone*, and enjoy my Satisfaction to *my ſelf*, I have endeavoured by this following Treatiſe of Heaven, and the Way thither, to *break* and *diſtribute* it among my diſtreſſed Neighbours; that ſo by carrying their Minds from theſe *diſmal* Expectations into the *quiet* and *happy* Regions above, and directing their Lives and Actions *thither*, I might communicate to them the bleſſed Art how to live *happily* in a diſtracted World. And methinks, when our *preſent* State is ſo perplext and uncertain, we ſhould be more than ordinarily concerned to make ſure of ſomething,

and

and to provide for a *future* Well-being, that ſo we may not be miſerable in *both* Worlds.

As for the *Argument* I have undertaken, I may without breach of Modeſty ſay, it is a *great* and a *noble* one; it is the *Chriſtian Life*, which next to the *Angelical* approaches neareſt to the Life of God. But as for the *Management* of it, all that I can ſay is this, I have imploy'd my *beſt* Thoughts and Skill about it; and if, after this, I have any where *wronged* or *miſrepreſented* it, it is more my *Unhappineſs* than my *Fault*. Perhaps it may be thought that in the *firſt three Chapters* I have diſcours'd more *ſpeculatively*, than 'tis fit in a Book that is deſign'd for *common* Uſe and Edification; but it may be when the Reader hath conſidered the *Nature* of the Arguments I have there handled, and how neceſſarily they fall in with my *Deſign*, he will be convinced that 'twas *unavoidable*. And yet I doubt not but with a little Diligence and Attention of mind the *plaineſt* Reader may be able to comprehend the main *Reaſon* and *Evidence* of what I drive at.

In the firſt place I thought 'twould be neceſſary in treating of the *Chriſtian Life*, to give ſome Account of the bleſſed *End* it refers to, that ſo from the Nature of *that*,

we

we might be the better able to judge of the *Neceſſity* and *Uſefulneſs* of thoſe *Means* which Chriſtianity preſcribes in order to it. And this I have endeavoured in the *firſt Chapter*; where I have only ſo far explained the Nature of the heavenly State and Felicities, as was neceſſary to light and conduct us through the enſuing Deſign.

In the ſecond place, I judg'd it would be no leſs expedient to give ſome *general* Account of what *kinds* of Means are neceſſary to our obtaining this *End*; that ſo we might be convinced how requiſite both the *principal* and *inſtrumental* Parts of the *Chriſtian Life* are to our everlaſting Happineſs. And this I have attempted in the *ſecond Chapter*; wherein from the Conſideration of the vaſt Diſtance there is between the *pure* and *bleſſed* State of Heaven, and this *corrupt* and *degenerate* State of Humane Nature, I have indeavour'd to ſhew that 'tis not only neceſſary for us to *practiſe* and *acquire* thoſe Chriſtian Vertues, in the perfection whereof the heavenly Bliſs conſiſts, but that to inable us to practiſe, acquire and improve them, there are ſundry *other* inſtrumental Duties indiſpenſably neceſſary; which Duties, as I have there proved, are of no other *Uſe* or *Significancy* in Religion, than as they are *Means* of Vertue and Piety.

And

And having thus diſtributed the Means into their proper Kinds and Order, I have in the *third Chapter* treated largely of the *firſt* Kind, to wit, the Practice of the *Chriſtian Vertues*; in which I confeſs I have neither handled the particular Vertues in their full *Extent* and *Latitude*, nor inforc'd them with all their *moral Reaſons*; that being done already to excellent purpoſe in thoſe two incomparable Treatiſes of *Holy Living and Dying*, and of *The Whole Duty of Man*. Nor could I have done it without ſwelling this Diſcourſe, which is large enough already, into a Volume too large for common Uſe. And indeed all that was neceſſary to *my* Purpoſe, was only ſo far to explain the Nature of each particular Vertue as that the Reader might thereby underſtand what is meant by them; but that which moſt concern'd me in purſuance of my *main* Deſign, was to prove that the Practice of every Vertue is an *eſſential* Part of the *Chriſtian Life*, and a *neceſſary* Means to the bleſſed End of it. And accordingly, as I have ſhewn from the expreſs Commands of our Religion our *indiſpenſible* Obligation to practiſe every Vertue; ſo I have endeavoured to ſhew how in the Practice of it we do naturally *grow up* to the heavenly State, as, on the contrary, how in the courſe of a ſinful Life we do by

by a neceſſary Efficiency gradually *ſink* our ſelves into the State of the Damned. For I have proved at large, that there is ſomething of *Heaven* and *Hell* in the very Nature of each particular *Virtue* and *Vice*, and that in the perfection of theſe two oppoſite *Qualities* conſiſts the main *Happineſs* and *Miſery* of thoſe two oppoſite *States*. From whence it will neceſſarily follow, that as in the Practice of the one or t'other we grow more *virtuous* or *vicious*, ſo proportionably we riſe up towards *Heaven*, or ſink down towards *Hell* by a fatal Tendency of Nature. The Truth of which is not only acknowledged by the generality of *Chriſtian Writers*, but alſo by the beſt and wiſeſt of the *Heathen Philoſophers*; though this, I think, is the *firſt* Attempt that hath been made to derive the Heavenly and the Helliſh States from the nature of the particular Virtues and Vices. I pray God that what I have ſaid may but ingage ſome more *skilful* Pen in the Proſecution of this *noble* Argument. For I know nothing in the World that can be more effectual to ingage men to be *ſubſtantially* Religious, to take them off from *Hypocriſie* and *Formality*, from all *preſumptuous* Hopes and *falſe* Dependencies, than their being throughly convinc'd of this Truth, that the eternal *Happineſs* or

Miſery

Misery of Souls is founded in their *Vertue* or *Vice*, and that there is as *inseparable* a Connection between *Grace* and *Glory*, *Sin* and *Hell*, as there is between *Fire* and *Heat*, *Frost* and *Cold*, or any other necessary *Cause* and its *Effect*. For if they were but throughly perswaded of *this*, they would easily discern what wretched *Non-sense* it is, to think of going to Heaven or escaping Hell whilst they continue in any wilful Course of *Disobedience* to the *Laws* of *Vertue*.

Having thus treated at large of the *first* Sort of Means by which the End of our *Christian Life* is to be obtained, I proceed in the *fourth Chapter*, which is the largest of all, to give an Account of the *second*, *viz.* the *Instrumental Duties* of Christianity, which are injoyn'd us as *Means* subservient to our Practice, Acquisition and Improvement of those *Heavenly Vertues* in the perfection whereof our Chief Happiness consists. And for the more distinct handling of these, I have considered men under a *Threefold* State with respect to the *Christian Life*; First, as *entering* into it; Secondly, as *actually ingaged* in it; Thirdly, as *perfecting* and *improving* themselves by *Perseverance* in it; to each of which I have *appropriated* such of the *instrumental Duties*

Duties as I conceived did more *especially* belong to them. 'Tis true, some of the Duties here treated of, are not *purely* instrumental, but of a *mixt* Nature, such as *Faith, Prayer, actual Dedication of our good Works to God*, &c. which are *essential* Parts of Divine Worship, and, as such, do belong to those *Divine Vertues* the Perfection whereof makes a Principal Part of the everlasting Happiness of Souls. But *here* I have considered them only as *Means* and *Instruments* in the Use of which we are to acquire and perfect those *Beatifical* Vertues. And of this sort of Means I do not remember any *one* Particular recommended in holy Scripture, but what hath been here treated of. Upon *some* indeed I have insisted much more *briefly*, than upon *others*, because I find them already *largely* accounted for in other practical Books, and especially in those two excellent Treatises above-named; but of those which *they* either cursorily touch, or take no notice of at all, I thought my self obliged to give a *larger* Account.

From the whole I would recommend to the pious Reader the Consideration of the admirable *Structure* and *Contrivance* of the *Practical Part* of Christianity, which having proposed to us an *End* so great and sublime, and so highly worthy of our most vi-

gorous

gorous proſecutions, hath alſo furniſh'd us with ſuch choice and effectual *Means* of all ſorts to attain it. The conſideration of which would be in it ſelf a great Inducement to me to believe *Chriſtianity* a *Divine Religion*, though I were utterly unacquainted with its *External* Evidence and Motives of Credibility. For it can never enter into my Head that ſuch a *rare* and *exquiſite* Contrivance to make men *good* and *happy*, could ever owe its Original to the meer invention of a *Carpenters Son*, and a company of illiterate *Fiſhermen*. Eſpecially conſidering how far it excels the Moral Precepts even of thoſe *divine Philoſophers* who believed the future State of a bleſſed Immortality, and exerciſed their beſt Wit in preſcribing *Rules* to guide and direct men thither.

And having given this large Account of the *inſtrumental Duties* of the *Chriſtian Life*, and alſo inforced the ſeveral Diviſions of them with proper *Arguments* and *Motives*, I thought fit to add a *fifth Chapter*, wherein I have given ſome *Rules* for the more profitable *reading* of this practical Diſcourſe, and alſo ſome general *Directions* for the Exerciſe of our *private Religion* in all the different States of the *Chriſtian Life*, together with certain *Forms* of *private Devotion* fitted for each State. In which I have ſuppo-

ſuppoſed, what I doubt is a very deplorable Truth, *viz.* that the Generality of Chriſtians after their *Initiation* by *Baptiſm* into the Publick profeſſion of Chriſtianity, are ſo unhappy as to be ſeduced either through bad *Example* or *Education* into a *vicious* State of Life; and that conſequently from *thence* they muſt take their firſt ſtart into the through Practice of Chriſtianity. Not that I make the leaſt doubt, but that there are a great many excellent Chriſtians, who by the Bleſſing of God upon their pious Education, have been ſecured from this Calamity, and trained up from their Infancy under a prevailing Senſe of God and Religion; and therefore for ſuch as theſe, as there is no need of that ſolemn method of *Repentance* preſcribed in the *firſt Section* of the *fourth Chapter*, ſo neither is there of thoſe firſt *penitential Prayers* in this *fifth Chapter*, which are accommodated to that State. For theſe perſons have long ſince been *actually ingaged* in the *Chriſtian Life*, and, as 'tis to be ſuppoſed, have made conſiderable *Improvements* in it, and therefore as they are only concerned in the Duties of the *ſecond* and *third* States of the *Chriſtian Life*, ſo they are only to uſe the Prayers which are fitted to *thoſe* States, which with ſome variation of thoſe phraſes which ſuppoſe

poſe the paſt Courſe of our Life to have been *vicious*, they may eaſily accommodate to their own Condition. But the Deſign of this Diſcourſe is not only to *conduct* them *onwards* in their Way who have already *entered* upon the *Chriſtian Life*, but alſo to *reduce* thoſe to it, who have been ſo unhappy as to *wander* into vicious Courſes; or rather, though it ſerves *both* Purpoſes, 'tis wholly deſigned for the *ſame* Perſons, *viz.* to *ſeek* and *bring back* thoſe loſt Sheep who have *ſtraid* from the Paths of Chriſtian Piety and Vertue, and then to *lead* them on through all the intermediate Stages to the happy State of immortal Pleaſures at the end of them. And now if what hath been ſaid ſhould, by the bleſſing of God, obtain its deſigned effect upon any perſon, I ask no other Requital for all the Pains it hath coſt me, but his earneſt Prayers to God for me, that after my beſt Endeavours to guide and direct *him* to Heaven, I may not fall ſhort of it *my ſelf*.

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SECT. III.

Containing those Instrumental Duties which are necessary for us when we are actually ingaged *in the Christian life*, p. 231, *&c. In General it is necessary that we should frequently* repeat *the Duties of our* Entrance, p. 232, 233, *&c. but more* particularly, *first, that we should arm our selves with* Patience *and* Courage, p. 236, 237, *&c. secondly, that we should propose to our selves the best* Examples, p. 239, 240, *&c. thirdly, that we should frequently apply our selves for Advice and Direction to our* Spiritual Guides, p. 245, 246, *&c. fourthly, that as often as we can we should actually* intend *and* aim at God *in the Course of our Lives and Actions*, p. 251, 252, *&c. fifthly, that we should possess our minds with an awful Apprehension of Gods* Presence *with and* Inspection *over us*, p. 258, 259, *&c. sixthly, that we should frequently* examine *and* review *our own Actions*, p. 266, 267, *&c. seventhly, that we should be very* watchful *and* circumspect, p. 270, 271, *&c. eighthly, that we should be diligent and industrious in our* Particular Callings, p. 274, 275, *&c. ninthly, that we should endeavour to keep up a constant* Chearfulness *of*

of Spirit *in Religion*, p. 283, 284, *&c. tenthly, that we ſhould maintain in our minds a conſtant* Senſe *and* Expectation *of* Heaven, p. 289, 290, *&c. eleventhly, that we ſhould live in the frequent Uſe of the publick* Ordinances *and* Inſtitutions *of our Religion*, p. 293, 294, *&c.*

SECT. IV.

Containing certain Motives *to animate men againſt the* Difficulties *of theſe Duties; firſt, that whatſoever Difficulty there is in them we may* thank our ſelves *for it*, p. 301, 302, *&c. ſecondly, that in the Courſe of our* Sin *there is a great deal of Difficulty as well as in theſe Duties*, p. 303, 304, *&c. thirdly, that how great ſoever the Difficulty be, it muſt be undergone, or that which is much* more intolerable, p. 305, 306, *&c. fourthly, that how difficult ſoever they may be, the Grace of God will render them* poſſible *to us, if we be not wanting to our ſelves*, p. 307, 308, *&c. fifthly, that though they are difficult, yet they are fairly conſiſtent with all our other* neceſſary Occaſions, p. 310, 311, *&c. ſixthly, that the Difficulty is ſuch as will* abate *and* wear off *by degrees*, p. 313, 314, *&c. ſeventhly, that there is a world of preſent* Peace *and* Satisfaction *intermingled with the difficulties*, p. 315, 316, *&c. eighthly, that the difficulty is abun-*

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dantly compenſated by the Reward *of them*, p. 318, 319, *&c.*

SECT. V.

Containing thoſe Inſtrumental Duties which are neceſſary for us in order to our improving towards Perfection *by* Perſeverance *in the Chriſtian life; which are firſt, that while we ſtand we ſhould not be* over-confident *of our ſelves, but keep a Jealous eye upon the Weakneſs and Inconſtancy of our own Natures*, p. 323, 324, *&c. ſecondly, that if at any time we* wilfully *fall, we ſhould* immediately *ariſe again by Repentance*, p. 326, 327, *&c. thirdly, that for the future we ſhould endeavour to withdraw our Affections from the* Temptations *of the world, and eſpecially from thoſe which were the Occaſion of our Fall*, p. 328, 329, *&c. fourthly, that we ſhould curiouſly ſearch into the ſmaller* Defects *and* Indecencies *of our Nature, in order to our timely correcting and reforming them*, p. 333, 334, *&c. fifthly, that we ſhould, as far as lawfully we can, live in the* Communion *of the* Church *whereof we are members*, p. 336, 337, *&c. ſixthly, that we ſhould not* ſtint *our Progreſs in Religion, (out of a fond Opinion that we are good* enough *already) to any* determinate Degrees or Meaſures *of Goodneſs*, p. 354, 355, *&c. ſeventhly, that we ſhould frequently entertain our ſelves with the* Proſpect

ſpect *of our* Mortality, p. 358, 359, *&c. eighthly, that to put our ſelves into a good Poſture of* Dying, *we ſhould diſcharge our Conſciences of all the* Reliques *and* Remains *of our paſt* Guilts, p. 361, 362, *&c. ninthly, that to* Compenſate, *ſo far as we are able, for thoſe Guilts, we ſhould take care to* Redeem *the Time we have formerly miſ-ſpent in ſinful Courſes by being* doubly diligent *in the Exerciſe of all the contrary Vertues*, p. 365, 366, *&c. tenthly, that we ſhould labour after a rational and well-grounded* Aſſurance, p. 369, 370, *&c.*

SECT. VI.

Containing certain Motives *to perſwade men to the Practice of theſe duties of* Perſeverance, *which are all deduced from the Conſideration of the* urgent *Neceſſity of our* final Perſeverance; *as firſt, unleſs we immediately recover when we have* wilfully relapſed *we ſhall go much faſter* back *than ever we went* forward, p. 377, 378, *&c. ſecondly, if after we have made ſome Progreſs in Religion we* totally Relapſe, *we ſhall thereby* forfeit *the* Fruit *of all our* paſt Labour, p. 379, 380, *&c. thirdly, we ſhall* forfeit *the* Fruit *of it after we have undergone the* greateſt *Difficulty of it*, p. 382, 383, *&c. fourthly, we ſhall not only forfeit the Fruit of our*

our paſt *Labour, but render our* Recovery *more* hazardous, p. 384, 385, *&c. Fifthly, we ſhall not only render our Recovery more difficult for the* future, *but plunge our ſelves for the* preſent *into a far more* criminal *and* guilty *Condition*, p. 388, 389, *&c. ſixthly, we ſhall not only render our ſelves more guilty for the preſent, but expoſe our ſelves if we die in our ſin to a* deeper *and more* dreadful Ruine, p. 393, 394, *&c.*

CHAP. V.

Containing ſome ſhort Directions *for the more Profitable* reading *the preceding Diſcourſe*, p. 396, 397, *&c. and alſo directions for the good Conduct and regular Exerciſe of our* Cloſet Religion *in all the different States of the Chriſtian Life, together with* Forms of private Devotion *fitted to each State*, p. 399. *the firſt are for the State of* Entrance *into the Chriſtian Life*, p. 400, 401, *&c. the ſecond for the State of* actual Engagement in *it*, p. 409. *the third for the State of* Growth *and* Improvement *towards Perfection*, p. 421.

OF

OF THE
Christian Life.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the ultimate End of the Christian Life.

IN order to our understanding, what is the Nature, Use, and Excellency of any *Means*, it is necessary we should have a true and genuine Notion of those peculiar *Ends* which they drive at. For the nature of them, as they are *Means*, consists in being serviceable to some *End*; but to what they are particularly serviceable, must be collected from the nature of those particular *Ends* whereunto they are directed. And therefore till we know what those particular *Ends* are, it is impossible we should know whether they are *Means* or no, or, which is the same thing, whether they are serviceable to any *End* or *Purpose*.

It being therefore the Design of this *Work* to explain the nature of the *Christian Life*, it will be necessary (for the clearing of our way) to give some account of the blessed *End* for which it

it is intended; which will very much contribute to our right underſtanding of the great uſefulneſs and ſubſerviency of each part of it thereunto. Therefore,

I. I ſhall endeavour to ſhew what is the peculiar *End* of the *Chriſtian Life*.

II. Wherein the true Nature of this *End* conſiſts.

I. As for the *End* of the *Chriſtian Life*, we are aſſured from Scripture, that it is no other but *Heaven* it ſelf, that ſtate of endleſs *Bliß* and *Happineß* which God hath prepared in the World above, for the reception of all thoſe, *who by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory and honour and immortality*. That this is the *End* of the *Chriſtian Life*, is evident from hence, becauſe 'tis every where propoſed by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, as the Chief good of a Chriſtian, and the Supreme Motive to all Chriſtian Vertue. For ſo S. *John*, that boſom-Favourite of our Saviour, aſſures us, that *This is the promiſe which Chriſt hath promiſed us, even Eternal Life*, 1 *John* ii. 25. And if we look into the Goſpel of S. *John*, who hath more largely recorded our Saviours Sermons and Diſcourſes than any other Evangeliſt, we ſhall find *Eternal Life* ſtill propoſed by him as the ſupereminent Promiſe to encourage and perſwade men to the profeſſion and practice of *Chriſtianity*. For ſo *John* iv. 36. 'tis propoſed by our Saviour as that which is the Harveſt of a Chriſtian, to which like the Husbandman's ploughing and ſowing, all our care and endeavour is to be directed; *He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto eternal life*. Conſonantly whereunto S. *Paul* tells us,

us, that *he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting*, *Gal.* vi. 8. And this, as our Saviour tells us, is the great Reward which he gives to all thoſe that hear and follow him, *John* x. 27, 28. and this is the great Argument which he every where inſiſts on, that he that believeth hath *Life everlaſting*, that whoſoever heareth his word hath *Life Everlaſting*, and that his Commandment is *Life Everlaſting*. And *Rom.* vi. 22. *Everlaſting Life* is expreſly ſaid to be the End of *having our fruit unto Holineſs*; and as ſuch we are bid to direct our actions unto it, to *believe in Chriſt unto Everlaſting Life*, 1 *Tim.* i. 16. to do good, to this end, that we *may lay hold upon Eternal Life*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 18, 19. *to look unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of our faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the croſs*, &c. *Heb.* xii. 2. And therefore Heaven is deſcribed to be the Chriſtian *Canaan*, to which we are to direct all our ſteps, whilſt we are travailing through this World, *Heb.* xi. 14, 15, 16. And the whole Life of a Chriſtian is expreſſed by *ſeeking* it: *Mat.* vi. 33. *Heb.* xiii. 14. *Col.* iii. 1. And the *incorruptible* Crown is affirmed to be as much the End of the race of the *Chriſtian Life*, as thoſe *corruptible* Crowns were of the races in the *Olympick Games*, 1 *Cor.* ix. 25. For it is to *Eternal Glory* that we are *called*, 1 *Pet.* v. 10. 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 14. and in the diſcharge of all that Duty whereunto we are *called*, we are to *look* to this *bleſſed Hope* as our great *End* and *Encouragement*, *Tit.* ii. 13.

This I have the more largely inſiſted upon, becauſe of a great miſtake that many perſons have lain

lain under in this matter; which is, that the *Glory of God* is the only ultimate *End* of a Chriſtian, and that this is a diſtinct *End* from *Heaven*; The firſt of which I confeſs, is very *true*, but the laſt abſolutely *falſe*. That the *glory of God* is the laſt End of a Chriſtian, is evident from thoſe Texts which bid us *do all to the glory of God*, 1 *Cor.* x. 31. and which make the *glory of God* to be the point in which all the *fruits of righteouſneſs* do concenter, *Phil.* i. 11. which propoſe this as the *End* of all Religious Performances, *that God in all things may be glorified*, 1 *Pet.* iv. 11. and affirm, that 'tis to this purpoſe that we are choſen to be Chriſtians, that we ſhould be to the *Praiſe of his Glory*, *Eph.* i. 12. But that the *glory of God* is no diſtinct *End* from our being made partakers of the *Happineſs* of *Heaven*, is as evident from hence, that this *Glory* conſiſts not in any thing that we can add or contribute to Him, whoſe eſſential Glory is ſo immenſe and ſecure, that there is nothing we can do, can either Increaſe or Diminiſh it; and there is no other Glory can redound to him from any thing without, but what is the Reflection of his own natural Rays. He underſtands himſelf too well, to value himſelf either the more or the leſs for the Praiſes or Diſpraiſes of his Creatures. For he is enough of Stage and Theatre to himſelf, and hath the ſame ſatiſfying Proſpect of his own *Glory* in the midſt of all the loud *Blaſphemies* of *Hell*, as among the perpetual *Hallelujahs* of *Heaven*. And having ſo, it cannot be ſuppoſed that he ſhould enjoyn us to Praiſe and Glorifie him for the ſake of any Good or Advantage that can accrue to *Himſelf* by it, or

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out of any other pleaſure he takes in hearing himſelf applauded and commended by us, than he doth in any other Act that is decent and reaſonable in its own Nature; but 'tis *therefore*, he will have us Praiſe him, becauſe he knows it is for *Our* Good, and highly conduces, as it is a moſt reaſonable Action, to the Perfection and Happineſs of our reaſonable Natures; becauſe our praiſing him naturally excites us to imitate him, and to tranſcribe into *our own* Natures thoſe Adorable Perfections, which we do ſo admire and extol in *His*. So that to purſue our own Perfection and Happineſs, is to Glorifie God according to his own deſign and intention; who requires us to Glorifie *him* for no other purpoſe, but that thereby we may glorifie *our ſelves*. And indeed *our* Happineſs is *Gods* Glory, even as *all* other worthy *Effects* are the Glory of their *Cauſes*. 'Tis *He* that gives being to it, and conſequently *He* that is glorified by it. It being nothing but the reſplendency of his own Almighty Goodneſs, or his own out-ſtretched Rays ſhining back upon Himſelf. And therefore *we* aim at Gods glory juſt as *He himſelf* doth, when we aim to be as happy as He would have us, that is, when we purſue Heaven and co-operate with his infinite Goodneſs, whoſe great deſign is to advance us to that bleſſed condition in which we ſhall Glorifie him for ever, and be Everlaſting Monuments of his overflowing Benignity. So that whether we call our laſt End *Heaven*, or the *Glory of God*, it is all but one and the ſame thing; ſince by obtaining Heaven, we ſhall Glorifie him according to his own *Deſign* and *Intention*. And this I think,

may ſuffice to ſhew, what is the true ultimate *End* of the *Chriſtian Life*. But then

II. It will be yet further neceſſary for our clearing the way to the Deſign in hand, to enquire what *Kind* of *Happineſs* this is; Which when we underſtand, we ſhall be the better able to comprehend what *Duties* or *Means* are neceſſary for the obtaining it. And this Enquiry will be eaſily reſolved, by conſidering the Nature of *Thoſe* for whom it was prepared and intended. For all *Happineſs* conſiſts in the *free* and *vigorous Exerciſe* of the Faculties of Nature, about Objects that are ſuitable to themſelves. There is indeed a *privative* happineſs, which is nothing but *Indolence*, or *freedom* from *pain* and *miſery*; and this conſiſts not ſo much in the *Exerciſe*, as in the *reſt* and *quiet* of the Faculties. And herein the ſoft and reſtive *Epicureans* placed the whole Happineſs of a Man: In which I confeſs, they would not be very much miſtaken, if there were no happineſs belonging to a Man beyond that Animal and Senſual one, in which the Diſciples of this *Atheiſtical Philoſopher* placed their chief Good. For the greateſt part of the Pleaſures of Senſe indeed are meerly *Privations* of Miſery, and ſhort Reprieves from the Griefs and Troubles of a wretched Life. For what elſe is our *Eaſe* and *Reſt*, but only the removal of our *Pain* and *Wearineſs*? which being removed, the Pleaſure is preſently over, and then we grow weary again of our *Reſt* and *Eaſe*; till *Pain* and *Wearineſs* return and ſweeten them, and gives them a freſh and new reliſh. For when we are weary of *Reſt*, we are fain to recreate our ſelves with *Action*, and when

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we are weary of *Action*, to refreſh our ſelves with *Reſt*, and ſo round again in the ſame Circle. Thus the greateſt part of the pleaſure of *Eating* and *Drinking* conſiſts in aſſwaging the pain of our *Hunger* and *Thirſt*. For when *this* is over, you ſee the pleaſure ceaſes; and till it returns again, every freſh morſel is but a new load to a tired Digeſtion. So that in ſhort, the greateſt part of thoſe *ſenſual Felicities* which we do here enjoy, are only ſhort intermiſſions of the *pains* and *uneaſineſſes* of a wretched Life. But if there were no other *Happineſs* belonging to a Man, but what conſiſts in not being ſenſible of *Miſery*, it were much more deſirable to be a *Stone* than a *Man*, and the only way for him to be perfectly Happy, would be, to deprive himſelf of all *Senſe* and *Perception*.

'Tis true, That which is *poſitive* in our Happineſs can never be perfectly enjoyed by us, without a perfect *Indolence* and *Inſenſibility* of *Pain*; it being impoſſible for us to have a *perfect ſenſe* of any thing, whilſt we have the leaſt touch or feeling of its *Contrary*. But were *Happineſs* nothing elſe but a *non-perception* of *Miſery*, it would have no *poſitive* Eſſence or reality of its own, which is directly contrary to all humane Experience. For we plainly feel, that our *Happineſs* hath in it, not only a *Reſt* from *Evil*, but a *grateful Motion* to *Good*, and that as our *Pain* and *Miſery* conſiſts in an *acute* and *ſenſible perception* of ſuch things as are moſt ungrateful to our Natures; ſo *Pleaſure* or *Satisfaction* conſiſts in a *vigorous perception* of the contrary. So that beſides *the not being miſerable* (which is not ſo properly an *Eſſential Part* of Happineſs, as a neceſſary *Diſpoſition* to it, without

which the Faculties of our Natures will be indiſpoſed to reliſh and perceive it) there is a *poſitive Happineſs* which (as I ſaid before) conſiſts in a *conſtant*, *free* and *vigorous Exerciſe* of the Faculties about ſuch Objects as are moſt convenient and ſuitable to their Natures. For *Happineſs* in the general includes *Perfection* and *Pleaſure*, both which are neceſſarily included in *ſuch* an Exerciſe of the Faculties. For *then* the Faculties are *Perfect*, *when* they are *freely*, *conſtantly* and *vigorouſly* imployed about ſuch objects, as are more congruous to their ſeveral natures; when they are recovered from all *indiſpoſitions*, whether *natural*, or *moral*, to thoſe proper motions and exerciſes for which they were framed; and do freely, conſtantly, and without any clog or interruption direct all their courſes towards ſuch Objects as are their natural Centers. And *then* the Faculties are moſt *pleas'd* and *delighted* too, *when* they are moſt vigorouſly exerciſed about that which is moſt ſuitable to them; when they are not only determined to ſuch Objects as are moſt agreeable to their Natures, but do alſo act upon and exert themſelves towards them with the greateſt *Sprightlineſs* and *Vigour*.

Theſe things I thought meet to premiſe concerning *Happineſs* in the *General*, as being very needful to the clearer reſolution of the preſent Enquiry, *viz.* Wherein conſiſts the *Heaven* or *Happineſs* of a *Man*. In ſhort therefore, the proper *Heaven* and *Happineſs* of a *Man*, conſidered as a *rational Being*, conſiſts in the *conſtant*, *free*, and *ſprightful* Exerciſe of his Faculties about ſuch Objects as are moſt convenient to his *rational Nature*,

Nature, which conſiſting wholly of *Underſtanding* and *Will*, that is, of a Faculty of *Knowing* and a Faculty of *Chuſing*, the moſt ſuitable Objects of it are ſuch as are moſt worthy to be *known*, and moſt worthy to be *choſen*. When therefore the *Underſtanding* is always *vigorouſly* exerciſed in ſeeing and contemplating the moſt glorious and excellent *Truths*, and the *Will* is always *vigorouſly* employed in chooſing and embracing the moſt deſirable *Goods*, then is the whole Rational Nature *Happy*. Now if you caſt abroad your thoughts over the whole extent of *Being*; you will preſently find that there is nothing in it ſo worthy to be *known* and *choſen* as *God*; whoſe Power being the ſource and fountain of all *Truth*, that is, of all that either *is* or is *poſſible*, and whoſe Nature being the ſubject of all *rational Perfection*, wherein it originally reſides, and from whence 'tis derived to all the Rational Creation; you muſt upon theſe accounts neceſſarily allow *Him* to be infinitely the moſt worthy Object in all the World of *Beings*, for our *Underſtanding* to *contemplate*, and our *Will* to *chuſe*. And if ſo, then the very Life and Quinteſſence of the *Heaven* of a *Man* conſidered as a *Reaſonable Being*, muſt needs conſiſt in a cloſe and intimate *Knowledge* of God, and a Free and Uncontroverted *Choice* of Him.

But that we may more fully comprehend the Nature of this *Happineſs*, it will be needful that we ſhould more diſtinctly explain, what theſe two Eſſential *Acts* of it do import, and what *Happineſs* is included in them. And

I. The *Happineſs* of a *Man* conſiſts in a free and intimate *Knowledge* of God, for our *Underſtanding*

ſtanding hath naturally as ſtrong an Appetite to *Truth*, as our *Stomach* hath to *Food*, and as grateful a reliſh of it, when it hath once diſcovered it, as an *Hungry-man* hath of a *pleaſant morſel*. And though in this life its *Appetite* is many times *pall'd* and *deadned*, partly through the *difficulty* of *knowing*, occaſioned either by the natural *indiſpoſitions* of its Organs, or the inveterate *prejudices* of a bad Education; and partly by being continually employed in *ſecular cares* and *purſuits*, which do perpetually *divert*, and ſo by degrees *wean* it from its natural inclination to *Truth*: Yet when we go from this World, and leave theſe cauſes behind us, which give ſuch a check to its *Appetite*, doubtleſs its hunger after *Knowledge* will immediately revive, and there will be no poſſibility of ever ſatisfying it without *it*.

Suppoſe we then the future World to be inhabited with a company of *Intellectual Beings*, that do all moſt *vehemently gaſp* after the *knowledge* of *Truth*; What can there be imagined more grateful to them, than to be admitted to the very Fountain of all *Truth* and *Reality*, there to quench their Thirſt, and ſatisfie their infinite Deſires, with the *free* and *eaſie*, but *ſtill freſh* diſcoveries of his infinite *Glories* and *Perfections*? Where will they be able to fix their *greedy Eyes* with comparably that Pleaſure and Delight, as upon the Myſterious *Trin-un-Divinity*, which is the eternal *Author* of all *Being*, the *Root* of all *Good*, and the *Rule* and *Source* of all *Perfection*? But then ſuppoſing, what is the caſe of theſe *Bleſſed Contemplators*, that their Minds are ſo *raiſed*, and their Apprehenſions are rendred ſo *unſpeakably quick* and *ſagacious*,

gacious, as that they can *All* know whatſoever they have a mind to, without the *difficulty* of *Study*, and preſently diſcern the Dependence and Connexion of Things without any *puzling Diſcourſe*, or *laborious Deduction*: with what incomparable ſatisfaction muſt they needs peruſe that infinite *Volume* of the Divine *Being* and *Perfections*.

Now that in that *Bleſſed State* they have unſpeakably *clearer* and more *perſpicuous* apprehenſions of Things, than ever they had *here*, that *noble* paſſage of S. *Paul* aſſures us, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *For now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I ſhall know, even alſo as I am known*: that is, now our *Knowledge* of Divine things is very *obſcure* and *imperfect*, they being ſhewn us as it were through a glaſs, on purpoſe to give us but a *glimpſe* of them; but when we come to *Heaven*, we ſhall *look cloſe* upon them, and have a far *clearer*, and more *diſtinct* Apprehenſion of them. Then we ſhall *know* God as truly as He *knows* us, and have as *real* and *certain* Apprehenſions of his *All-glorious Being*, as He hath of Ours. So that in *Heaven*, you ſee, the *Eyes* of thoſe *Bleſſed Minds*, that inhabit it, are ſo *invigorated*, that they can gaze upon the Sun without *dazling*; contemplate the pure and immaculate Glories of the Deity, without being *confounded* with their *brightneſs*; and their Underſtanding being thus *exalted* they muſt needs apprehend more at *one ſingle view*, than we can do in *volumes* of Diſcourſe, and *tedious long trains* of Deduction.

And then enjoying as they do, a moſt *perfect repoſe* both from *within* and *without* them, they

are never *diſturbed* in their *eager contemplations*; which having ſuch a vaſt *Horizon* of *Truth* and *Glory* round about them, are ſtill diſcovering farther, and farther, and ſo *continually* entertain'd with freſh *Wonders* and *Delights*. What an infinite deal of Pleaſure then muſt that *All-glorious Object* afford to ſuch *raiſed* and *elevated* Minds, which like *tranſparent Windows*, let in without any Labour or Difficulty all that *Divine* and *Heavenly light* which freely offers it ſelf unto, and ſhines for ever round about them; and which by every *new* Diſcovery of God, and of theſe *bottomleſs ſecrets* and *myſteries* of his Nature, are ſtill enlarged to diſcover *more*, and ſtill have *new* Diſcoveries offering themſelves, as faſt as they are enlarged to receive them. This *of it ſelf* is ſo great a part of Heaven, that S. *John* himſelf ſeems to be at a lôſs how to imagine any Heaven *beyond* it. 1 John iii. 2. *Beloved, now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know that when He ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him*, that is, in Glory and Happineſs, *for we ſhall ſee him as he is*. But then

II. The *Heaven* or *Happineſs* of a *Man* conſiſts alſo in a free and undiſtracted *choice* of God; that is in *chuſing* him for the Rule and Pattern of our *Natures*, and for the object of our *Love*, *Adoration* and *Dependence*; all which, (as I ſhall ſhew hereafter) are *Beatifical Acts*, and do abundantly contribute to the *Happineſs* of *Reaſonable Creatures*. For *Happineſs*, (as hath been premiſed) conſiſts not in *Reſt*, but in *Motion*, and there is no *Motion* can contribute to the *Happineſs* of any Being, but what is ſuitable to its own

Nature.

Nature. Now what *motion* can be more ſuitable to the nature of a *Reaſonable Creature*, than to Love and Adore the Author of its *Being* and *Well-Being*; to bow to the *Will* of the *Almighty Sovereign*, and to imitate the *Perfections* of the *Supreme Standard* and *Pattern* of all *Reaſonable Beings*; to rely and depend on his *infinite Power*, that is always conducted by his *infinite Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs?* All which are founded upon ſo many ſtrong, evident and undeniable *reaſons*, that the very naming of them is ſufficient to juſtifie them to our Faculties, and demonſtrate them to be infinitely agreeable to the moſt *fundamental Principles* of our *Reaſonable Nature*. And being ſo, it is impoſſible but that of themſelves they ſhould be exceeding *joyous* and *bliſsful*; for as the *ſenſitive* nature is moſt gratified with thoſe Acts that have moſt of *Senſe* in them, ſo is the *Rational* with thoſe that have moſt of *Reaſon* in them. And certainly thoſe have moſt *Reaſon* in them which are terminated upon Objects which moſt *deſerve* them; and what Object can ſo well *deſerve* to be acted upon by *Reaſonable Beings* as God? or what *Acts* can they ſo reaſonably exert upon him, as thoſe of *Love* and *Adoration*, *Homage*, and *Imitation*, *Truſt* and *Dependence*? But as no *Acts* of *Senſe* can be very grateful to our *Senſitive Nature* ſo long as we exert them either with *repugnance*, or *indifferency*, ſo neither can any Acts of *Reaſon* be to our *Rational*; the Pleaſure of all Acts, whether *Senſitive* or *Rational*, conſiſting (as I ſhew'd before) in the *Sprightfulneſs* and *Vigour* of them. And this is the cauſe why men *now* find ſo little Felicity in theſe moſt *Rational* Acts of *Godlineſs*, becauſe

becauſe by their own *bad cuſtoms* they have rendered themſelves *averſe*, or at leaſt very *cold* and *indifferent* to them, which neceſſarily renders us *dead* and *liſtleſs* in the exerciſe of them, and conſequently cauſes them to go off with *little guſt*, if not with an *ungrateful reliſh*. But even in this *imperfect ſtate* we find by experience, that the more our *corrupted nature* diſcharges and diſburdens it ſelf of thoſe *vicious indiſpoſitions*, which do ſo *cramp* and *arreſt* it in theſe its *Heavenly operations*, the more it is *pleaſed* ſtill and *delighted* in them; Yea, and that when it is ſo far inured to a *Godly Life* as to be able to practiſe the ſeveral *vertues* of it, but with the ſame degree of *activity* and *vigour* as 'twas wont to do its moſt *beloved Luſts*, it is unſpeakably more *pleaſed* and *ſatisfied*, and finds more *Sweetneſs* by a thouſand degrees, in its *Love* and *Adoration*, *Obedience* and *Imitation of God*, than ever it did in the higheſt reliſhes of *Epicuriſm* and *Senſuality*; that the more perfectly we *Love* and *Adore*, &c. the more of *Heaven* we taſte in theſe *Bleſſed Acts*, and that, when by a *long* and *conſtant* practice of them we have once rendered them *natural* to us, we enjoy ſuch an *Heaven upon Earth* in the *eaſie*, *free* and *vigorous exerciſe* of them, as we would not exchange for all the Pleaſures and Felicities which the World can afford us. And yet, God knows, the moſt perfect ſtate of *Godlineſs* which we attain to *here*, hath ſo many degrees of *imperfection* in it, and in this we are ſo diſturbed and interrupted by *bodily Indiſpoſitions*, and the *troubles* and *neceſſities* of this preſent Life, that from the *Joy* and *Pleaſure* which reſults from it here, we can hardly

gueſs

gueſs at thoſe *raviſhing Felicities* which will ſpring out of it *hereafter*. When we ſhall be perfectly releaſed from all the encumbrances of *fleſh* and *blood*, and *ſin*; when we ſhall be tranſlated into a *free* and *quiet ſtate*, wherein we ſhall have nothing elſe to do, but only to *know* and *love*, *obey* and *imitate*, and have no *imperfection* either *natural* or *vicious*, to clog or diſturb us in this our *Beatifical employment*. Wherein we ſhall act with all our *vigour* and *might*, and thruſt forth the whole *ſtrength* of our Souls in every *Love* and every *Obedience*; ſo that every *motion* of our Souls towards God, ſhall have the *Vehemence* of a Rapture in it, without the *Violence*. When, I ſay, we ſhall be *eternally* fixed in a State of ſuch perfect *Freedom* and *Activity*, our *Happineſs* muſt needs be as large as our *Deſires*, and as great as our utmoſt *Capacity* or *Power* of *Acting upon God*. For now we ſhall *imitate* the moſt *Perfect*, and *adore* the moſt *Adorable*, as much as *ever* we are *able*; that is, we ſhall perform with all our *might* and *vigour* the Acts that are moſt agreeable to our *Reaſonable Nature*: and in the utmoſt *vigour* of ſuch *Acts* (as I have already ſhewed) conſiſts our utmoſt *Happineſs*.

Suppoſe we then a Society of *Rational Beings* placed in ſuch a State, wherein they have an Object of *infinite Perfections* always before them, and no Evil from *without* or *within* to check or divert them from exerting *all their Powers* upon him in the moſt *reaſonable Actions*: Suppoſe them now to be moving with *unſpeakable vigour* and *agility*, like ſo many *ever-living Orbs* about this their *everlaſting Center*; to be as full of *Love* and *Duty* to him

him as ever their *Hearts* can *hold*; to be *copying* his *Perfections*, and *adoring* his *Excellencies* with an uncontroulable *Freedom* and *Alacrity*, and breathing forth themselves to him in *chearful Praises* and *Rapturous Hallelujahs*; in a word, to be exercising themselves about him to their utmost *Strength* and *Power*, in all those *blessed Offices* which *his* Nature and *their* Relation to him call for: Suppose, I say, *all this*, and you have before ye that which is the very *top* and *flower* of the *Heaven* of a *reasonable Creature*; who in this *blessed state* is fixed, as it were in his own proper *Element*, where, without any *lett* or *disturbance*, he freely *moves* and *acts* according to his most *natural Tendence* and *Inclination*.

And now by this time I think it is clear enough, that the *main* and *principal Part* of the *Heaven* of a *Man*, considered as a *reasonable Creature*, consists in *Knowing* and *Chusing* of God. But besides *this*, there are other blessed *Ingredients* of Heaven; the *principal* whereof is, the Knowing and Chusing *those* that are *most like* unto God; namely, the *blessed Jesus* in his *Humane Nature*, and the *Holy Angels* and *Saints*, who are *all* in their several Measures and Degrees the express and lively *Images* of God. And therefore if to Know and Chuse God be the *supreme* Felicity of Heaven, then doubtless the *next* to that is, to *Know* and be *Acquainted* with these blessed *Images* of him, and freely to *chuse* their *Company* and *Conversation*, and be entirely *united* to them in *Affection*; without which it would be no Felicity to dwell in the *same place* with them. For to *co-habit* with Jesus and with Saints and Angels,

and

and not be *acquainted with*, and *united to* them in *Heart* and *Affection*, would be rather a *Burden* than a *Pleaſure*. The Happineſs therefore of being in their *Society*, conſiſts in *Knowing* and *Chuſing* them. And this is every where implied, where our being with *them* is mentioned as a part of our Heaven. Thus, 1 Theſ. iv. 17. to *be ever with the Lord*, is the ſame thing with being *ever in Heaven:* but then, 'tis to be ever with him upon *Choice*; for ſo thoſe words imply, Phil. i. 23. *I deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt which is far better.* And accordingly this is mentioned by the Apoſtle as a *dear Priviledge* of our being Members of the *Chriſtian Church*, whereby we are entituled to the Society of *Holy Myriads of Angels, of the general Aſſembly of the Church of the firſt-born, of God the Judge of all, of the Spirits of Juſt men made perfect, and of Jeſus the Mediator of the New Covenant*, Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. And indeed this muſt needs be an *ineſtimable Happineſs*, not only to *cohabit*, but be *acquainted with*, and in Heart and Will *united* to this Bleſſed and Glorious Company. For what Soul that has any *Spark* of Cordial Love to *Jeſus*, the *beſt Friend* of *Souls* that ever was, any *grateful remembrance* of what he *did* and *ſuffered* for our ſakes; would not eſteem it a *mighty Felicity* to be admitted into his *Preſence*, and to be an *Eye-witneſs* of the happy Change of his paſt *woful* Circumſtances? To ſee him that was ſo *cruelly treated*, ſo barbarouſly *vilified*, *tortured* and *butchered* for our ſakes, *raiſed* to the higheſt pitch of Splendour and Dignity, to be *Head* and *Prince* of all the *Hierarchy* of Heaven, to be *worſhipped* and *celebrated* throughout all the noble *Choir* of *Arch-Angels*

gels and *Angels* and *Spirits of juſt men made perfect?* Verily methinks had I only the Priviledge to *look* in and *ſee* my dear and bleſſed Lord *ſurrounded* with all this *Circle* of Glories, it would be a moſt *Heavenly Conſolation* to me, though I were ſure never to *partake* of it. The very *Communion* I ſhould have in the *Joys* of my *Maſter*, would be a kind of Heaven at *Second-hand* to me, and my Soul would be wondrous Happy by *Sympathizing* with him in his *Felicity* and *Advancement*. But Oh! when that *Bleſſed Perſon* ſhall not only *permit* me to *ſee* his Glory, but *introduce* me into it, and make me *Partaker* of it; when I ſhall not only *behold* his *Beloved Face*, but be *admitted* into his *Dear Converſation*, and *dwell* in his *Arms* and *Embraces* for ever; when I ſhall hear him record the *wondrous Adventures* of his Love, through how many *woful Stages* he paſſed to reſcue me from *Miſery*, and make me *Happy*, and in the mean time ſhall have a moſt *raviſhing Feeling* of *that* Happineſs; how will my Heart *ſpring* with *Joy*, and *burn* with *Love*, and my Mouth *o'reflow* with *Praiſes* and *Thankſgivings* to him!

And as our Acquaintance with, and Choice of the *Bleſſed Jeſus* muſt needs contribute vaſtly to our Happineſs; ſo muſt alſo (though not in ſo *high* a Degree) our being *intimately acquainted* and *united* with *Saints* and *Angels*. Who being not only endowed with large and comprehenſive *Underſtandings*, but alſo with perfect *Good-nature* and moſt generous *Charity*, muſt needs make *excellent Company*. For as their *Goodneſs* cannot but render their Converſation infinitely *free* and *benign*, ſo their great *Knowledge* muſt neceſſarily render

render it equally *profitable* and *delightful*. And then being ſo *Knowing* as they are, they muſt needs be ſuppoſed to *underſtand* all the *wiſe Arts* of *Endearment*; and being ſo *Good*, they muſt be alſo ſuppoſed to be continually *practiſing* them. And if ſo, what a *Heavenly Converſation* muſt theirs be, the *Scope* whereof is the moſt *glorious Knowledge*, and the *Law* whereof is the moſt *perfect Friendſhip?* Who would not be willing to leave a *fooliſh*, *froward*, and *ill-natur'd* World, for the bleſſed Society of theſe *wiſe Friends* and *perfect Lovers?* And what a Felicity muſt it be to ſpend an Eternity in ſuch a *noble* Converſation! Where we ſhall hear the *deep Philoſophy* of Heaven communicated with *mutual Freedom* in the Wiſe and Amicable Diſcourſes of *Angels* and of *Glorified Spirits*; who without any *Reſerve*, or *affectation of Myſtery*, without *Paſſion* or *Intereſt* or *peeviſh Contention* for *Victory*, do *freely* Philoſophize, and *mutually* impart the treaſures of each others *Knowledge*. For ſince all *Saints* there are great *Philoſophers*, and all *Philoſophers* perfect *Saints*, we muſt needs ſuppoſe *Knowledge* and *Goodneſs*, *Wiſdom* and *Charity* to be equally intermingled throughout all their Converſation; and being ſo, what can be imagined more delightful! When therefore we ſhall leave this *impertinent* and *unſociable* World; and all our *good old Friends* that are gone to Heaven before us, ſhall meet us as ſoon as we are landed upon the ſhore of Eternity, and with infinite congratulations for our ſafe Arrival ſhall conduct us into the Company of the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, *Apoſtles* and *Martyrs*, and introduce us into an *intimate* Acquaintance with them, and

with

with all thoſe *brave* and *generous* Souls, who by their glorious Examples have recommended themſelves to the World; when we ſhall be *familiar Friends* with *Angels* and *Arch-Angels*, and all the *Courtiers* of Heaven ſhall call us *Brethren*, and bid us *Welcome* to their *Maſters Joy*, and we ſhall be received into their glorious Society with all the tender endearments and Careſſes of thoſe *Heavenly Lovers*; what a *mighty* Addition to our Happineſs will this be!

There are indeed ſome other additions to the Happineſs of Heaven; ſuch as the *Glory* and *Magnificence* of the *Place*, which is the *Higheſt Heaven*, or the upper and purer Tracts of the *Æther*, which our Saviour calls *Paradiſe*, Luke xxiii. 43. and S. *Paul* the *Third Heaven*, 2 Cor. xii. 2. both which in the phraſe of that Age beſpeak it to be a place of *unſpeakable Glory*; for ſo the Jews do commonly call this bleſſed Seat, the *Third* or *Angel-bearing* Region of Heaven, by which they denote it to be the *Palace* of the *King* of the whole World, where his moſt glorious Courtiers do reſide, ; and they alſo call it *Paradiſe*, in alluſion to the Earthly Paradiſe of *Eden*; becauſe as *that* was the *Garden* of this *lower* World, ſo *this* is of the *whole Creation*. And though we have no *exact deſcription* of this place in *Scripture*, and that perhaps becauſe no humane Language can deſcribe it; yet ſince God hath choſen it for the *Everlaſting Theatre* of Bliſs and Happineſs, we may thence reaſonably conclude that he hath moſt *exquiſitely furniſhed* it with all accommodations requiſite to a moſt *happy* and *bliſsful* Life.

Beſides

Beſides which alſo there is the *everlaſting Duration* of it, which is another great Acceſſion to its Happineſs. That ſuch is the Nature of its Enjoyments, as that they do not, like all other Pleaſures, *ſpend* and *waſte* in the Fruition; that though it will be always *feeding* our Faculties with new Delights, yet it will never be *exhauſted*, but be always *equally*, becauſe *infinitely*, diſtant from a Period. So that its Happineſs conſiſting of an *infinite Variety* of Pleaſure extended to an *infinite Duration*, it will be impoſſible for thoſe that enjoy it to be either *cloy'd* with the repetition of it, or *tormented* with the fear of loſing it.

But theſe *Two laſt* I only mention, becauſe they do not ſo properly belong to our preſent Argument; which is only to explain the Nature of *Heaven* ſo far as is neceſſary to the right underſtanding of the Nature of thoſe *Means* by which it is to be attained.

Now from what hath been ſaid concerning this great *End* of the *Chriſtian Life*, theſe *Two* things are to be inferr'd concerning the *Nature* of it.

I. That the *main* of Heaven conſiſts not ſo much in any *outward* Poſſeſſion, as in an *inward* State and Temper. For though Heaven be doubtleſs a moſt *glorious Place*, and all its bleſſed *Inhabitants* do poſſeſs and hold it by an everlaſting *Tenure*, yet 'tis a great miſtake to imagine that the main happineſs of Heaven conſiſts in living for ever in a *glorious Place*, which ſeparated from all the reſt of Heaven would be but a *poor* and *hungry* kind of Happineſs. For *Life* is no otherwiſe a Happineſs, than as it is the Principle of all our

pleasant and *grateful Perceptions*; and if we could live for ever without *perceiving*, it would be the same thing to us, as if we were nothing but a Company of everlasting *Stones* and *Trees*; and what great matter would it signifie to live for ever in a *glorious Place*, unless we could be for ever affected by it with a *delightful sense* and *perception*; which is impossible; because all *delightful sense* (as hath already been proved) arises out of the *vigorous exercise* of our Faculties about such Objects as are suitable to them; but what can there be in the most *glorious Place* so suitable to a *Rational Mind* and *Will*, as to keep them for ever *vigorously* employed and exercised about it? It may indeed for a while employ the *Mind* in an eager Contemplation of its *new* and *surprizing* Beauties; but how soon would the Mind dis-relish it, were it to be its *only* entertainment for Eternity? And as for the *Will*, what would a fine Place signifie to it, if it were not replenished with such Objects as are suitable to its own *Options?* And indeed there is nothing that can *everlastingly* gratifie a Rational Mind and Will, but what has in it such an *Infinity* of *Truth* as is everlastingly *Knowable*, and such an *Infinity* of *Goodness* as is everlastingly *Desirable*; or, which is the same thing, nothing but what hath *Truth* enough in it for the one to be vigorously *contemplating* for ever, and nothing but what hath *Goodness* enough in it for the other to be as vigorously *loving*, *adoring*, and *imitating* for ever. And such an Infinitude of *Truth* and *Goodness* is no where to be found but in *God*. But *God*, as well as the *Place*, and *Duration* of Heaven, being an Object that is *external* to us, neither is,

nor

nor can be a Happineſs to us unleſs we *act upon* him, and *freely exerciſe* our Faculties about him; unleſs we *Know* him, and *Love* him, *&c.* So that *that* which *Felicitates* all, is our own *Internal Act*; 'tis by *this* that we enjoy Heaven, and perceive all the Pleaſures of it. 'Tis not by *being in Heaven* that men are conſtituted Happy, but by *vigorouſly exerting* their Faculties upon the Heavenly Objects. For without *this*, to be *in* Heaven or *out of it* would be indifferent to us. The Happineſs of Heaven therefore conſiſts in a *State* of *Heavenly Action*; in being ſo *attempered* and *connaturaliz'd* to the Objects of Heaven, as to be always *acting upon*, and *chearfully employing* our Faculties about them. For as there is no Pleaſure in Acting *coldly* upon *ſuitable* Objects, ſo there is Pain and Trouble in acting *vigorouſly* upon *unſuitable* ones. And therefore to make *Heaven* it ſelf a *Happineſs* to us, 'tis neceſſary not only that we ſhould act vigorouſly upon the Objects of it, but that we ſhould *ſo* act from a *ſuitableneſs* of Temper to them. That we ſhould contemplate God, ſubmit to his Will, adore and imitate his Perfections from a *God-like Temper* and *Diſpoſition*. For otherwiſe theſe Acts will be *Penances* inſtead of *Pleaſures* to us; and the more *intenſely* we exert them, the more *painful* they will be. And if we were in Heaven, all that Heavenly Exerciſe in which the Happineſs of it conſiſts, would be but a *Torment* and *Vexation* to us, unleſs we had a *Heavenly Temper*. For as the Parts of *Matter* can never *reſt*, but do move about in a perpetual *Whirl-pool*, till they *hit* into a place or *Interſtice* that is of the ſame *Form* and *Figure* with them; ſo there is nothing can *reſt* in Heaven but

what is *Heavenly*. All that is otherwiſe *rebounds* and *flies off* of its own accord, and can never *acquieſce* there, till 'tis of the ſame Form, and Temper, and Diſpoſition with it. From hence therefore it's evident, that the Happineſs of a Man in *Heaven* conſiſts not ſo much in the *outward* Glory of the Place, as in the *inward* State of his own Mind, which from a *ſuitableneſs* of Temper to the Heavenly Objects doth always *freely* employ and exerciſe its Faculties about them.

II. That the *Heavenly State* is nothing elſe but the *Perfection* of all *Heavenly Vertue*. For it hath been already proved, That Heaven conſiſts in a clear and intimate *Knowledge*, and a free and unconteſted *Choice* of God, and of thoſe Bleſſed Beings that reſemble him; and *theſe Two* comprehend *all* Heavenly Virtue. So that the difference between the ſtate of *Grace* and *Glory* is not in *Kind*, but in *Degree*. For Grace is the *Seed* of Glory, and Glory is the *Maturity* of Grace. 'Tis *Knowledge* exalted above all *Error* and *Prejudice*, above all *Difficulty* or *Obſcurity* of Apprehenſion; 'tis *Love* ſtrained from all *repugnancies* of Fleſh and Spirit, and refined into a pure *Celeſtial flame*; 'tis *Obedience* to, and *Imitation* of God, perfectly ſeparated from all *ſinful* Defects, and freed from the *Clog* of *counter-ſtriving* Principles; 'tis *Adoration* of and *Dependency* upon him, without the leaſt degree of *Indiſpoſition* or *Deſpondency*; in a word, 'tis a *free* and *uncontrolled* Motion of all the Heavenly Virtues together, in which they are every one moſt *vigorouſly* exerted, without the leaſt *Check* or *Impediment*. This therefore being the *State of Heaven*, as is evident from what hath been diſcourſed,

courſed, it hence follows, that the main difference between *Virtue* and *Heaven* is only *Gradual*; that Virtue is the *Beginning* of Heaven, and Heaven is the *Perfection* of Virtue. And if ſo, then as the *loweſt* Degree of true Virtue is a *ſtep* Heaven-wards, ſo every *farther* Degree is a *nearer Approach* towards the Heavenly ſtate. So that as we *grow* in Grace, and proceed from *one* Degree of Virtue to *another*, we draw *nearer* and *nearer* to that bleſſed Condition in which we ſhall be all *pure Virtue* without any *ſinful* Alloy or Intermixture. And this is the true *State* and *Condition* of Heaven.

CHAP. II.

Concerning the Means *by which this Great* End *of the* Chriſtian Life *is to be attained.*

IT is to be conſidered that the great Deſign of Chriſtianity being to *advance* our Natures to ſuch a ſublime Degree of Purity and Perfection as is requiſite to capacitate us for the Enjoyment of a *Heavenly Bliſs*; it was neceſſitated in order hereunto, to ſtrain our Duty to a greater *height* than any *preceding* Law had done before it. For the *End* of all Gods *Laws* is the *Happineſs* of his *Subjects*; and therefore that they may be effectual *Means* to promote this *End*, it's neceſſary that the *Duties* they enjoyn ſhould be ſuch as the *Nature* of our Happineſs requires. Now in the firſt ſtate

of our Nature, which was that of *Innocence*; we ſeem to have been deſign'd only for a *Terreſtrial Paradiſe*, that is, to enjoy the pleaſures of a pure mind inhabiting a ſenſitive and animal body, and therefore had we ſtood (which God foreſaw we ſhould not, and therefore deſign'd us for a more raiſed and heavenly condition) our happineſs would have been what it is now in this world, though in a higher degree, *viz.* a compound of ſpiritual and bodily delights, to be enjoy'd in a ſtate of earthly immortality which would have been of a much inferior nature to that pure ſtate of ſpiritual happineſs whereunto we are now deſigned and directed: And to ſerve this former end in the poſſeſſion of which man was placed in the ſtate of *Innocence*, God gave him the *Law of Nature*, which ſeems to have been nothing elſe but only *Right Reaſon* dictating to us what is neceſſar, to be done in order to this our *Earthly Happineſs*. And accordingly the Duties of this Law were of a much *lower* ſtrain than the Duties of Chriſtianity; they being intended for the Means and Inſtruments of a much *lower* Happineſs. For in this our *Earthly* and *Animal* State, Right Reaſon could require nothing of us but what was ſubſervient to our *Earthly* and *Animal* Felicity; which was only a mixture of bodily and mental, ſenſitive and rational pleaſure, and nothing could be *good* for us but what tended thereunto, nothing *evil* but what did obſtruct and oppoſe it. But now that our Happineſs is placed in *another* World, and in ſuch *vaſtly different* Enjoyments from thoſe of a Terreſtrial Paradiſe, we muſt proceed upon *other* Principles. For now every

every Action is Good or Bad, Wiſe or Fooliſh, as it *ſerves* or *hinders* our happineſs in the World to come. And therefore it is highly reaſonable that now we ſhould live at a *different rate*, than what we were obliged to in that *Animal* ſtate wherein we were firſt Created; that we ſhould ſubmit our *earthly* to our *heavenly* Intereſt, and renounce the Joys and Pleaſures of *this* Life, whenſoever they ſtand in competition with the *ſpiritual* Felicities of the *Life to come*. *Now* we are no longer to look upon this World as our *Native Country*, but as a *Foreign Land*; and ſo we are to reckon our ſelves *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* upon Earth; and accordingly to uſe the conveniencies of this Life as *ſtrangers* do their *Inns*, not to abide or take up our habitation in them, but only to bait and away, and refreſh our ſelves that ſo we may be the better enabled to perform our Journey to the Eternal World. For the ſcene of our *Happineſs* being ſhifted from an Earthly Immortality, to an Heavenly; and conſequently the Happineſs it ſelf being now much more *ſublime* and *pure* and *ſpiritual* than it would have been, had it continued Earthly; it's neceſſary that our Nature ſhould be *exalted* with it, and that we ſhould be *raiſed* as high above the *condition* of meer Earthly Creatures, as *that* is above the *rank* and *quality* of an Earthly Happineſs; otherwiſe it will be impoſſible for us to reliſh and enjoy it.

Now every Agent hath need of *more* or *fewer* Means proportionably as he is *farther off*, or *nearer* to the End he drives at. As for inſtance, the Husbandman that hath a *fat* and *fruitful* Soil to ſow his Seed in, is *nearer* to the attaining of a good

Harveſt, than he that hath a *barren* or *ſtony* Ground to work upon; and therefore hath much *leſs* to do. For whereas the latter, before he can plow and ſowe, muſt manure his Ground and gather out the ſtones of it; the former needs only plow up the fertile Earth, and caſt his Seed into it. Or to come cloſer to the caſe in hand; a man that is meerly *ignorant* is in a much *nearer* capacity of true Knowledge, than he whoſe mind is altogether prejudiced with *erroneous* Principles; and therefore needs much *fewer* Helps and Means to attain it. For *his* mind being perfectly diſengaged, is like a fair Paper, on which as there is nothing *writ*, ſo there is nothing to be *blotted out*; So that all that he hath to do, is to enquire after and receive the Truth when it is fairly propoſed to him. But as for the *Prejudiced* man, he hath a great deal to unlearn, before he can be capable of Learning; a great many *falſe* Principles to be expunged, before ever the *true* Notions of Things can be imprinted on his Underſtanding.

If therefore we would take a true account of all thoſe *Means* that are neceſſary to our attaining of Heaven, we muſt conſider what a *vaſt diſtance* we are from it in this corrupt and degenerate ſtate of our Nature. If we were in a ſtate of *Indifference* between Vertue and Vice we ſhould be much *nearer* Heaven than we are; For then, as we ſhould be without thoſe *Heavenly virtues* in the free Exerciſe whereof the ſtate of Heaven conſiſts; ſo we ſhould be without all that *Repugnance* and *Averſation* to them which renders them ſo difficultly attainable; and our Nature being already in an *Æquilibrium* would by the leaſt *over-weight* of Motive be preſently inclined to Virtue and Goodneſs. But, alas!

alas! in this *corrupt* ſtate whereinto we are ſunk, our Nature runs Evil-wards with a very ſtrong and prevailing *Biaſs*; and is not only *void* of virtue, but *averſe* to it. And this ſets us at a far greater diſtance from the bleſſed *End* of our Religion than otherwiſe we ſhould be. For every Degree of vicious Inclination that is in us, is a *Remove* from Heaven, a *Deſcent* from that Perfection of Virtue wherein the Heavenly Bleſſedneſs conſiſts. And if ſo, how *remote* from Heaven are the Generality of men in the Beginning of their Progreſs thither; when to their natural *Corruption* they have ſuperadded by their ſinful Courſes ſo many inordinate *Inclinations* and inveterate ſinful *Habits*; when by a long ſeries of wicked Actions, they have raiſed and blown up their Concupiſcence into ſuch raging *flames* of Luſt as *generally* they do! And being thus far gone back from our *End*, there are ſundry *Means*, which otherwiſe would have been perfectly *needleſs* and *ſuperfluous*, that are now become abſolutely *neceſſary* thereunto. For had we begun our Progreſs towards Heaven from a ſtate of *Indifferency* between Virtue and Vice, we had had no more to do but to practiſe thoſe ſeveral virtues of Religion, of which the Heavenly Life and ſtate conſiſts; to *love* and to *contemplate*, to *adore*, and to *obey* God, and behave our ſelves *juſtly* and *charitably* towards one another; all which would have been ſo *eaſie*, that we ſhould have had no occaſion of any *Inſtrumental Duties* to facilitate them to us. Whereas now ſtarting Heaven-wards, as we generally do, from a moſt *corrupt* and *degenerate* State, there are ſundry *other* Means which we muſt uſe as *Inſtruments* that are neceſſary to our

our acquiring and perſevering in the virtues of the Heavenly Life; to our conquering the Difficulties, and killing the vicious Averſations of our Natures againſt them: All which would have been *needleſs*, at leaſt in a great meaſure, had not our Nature been ſo *depraved* and *corrupt* as it is.

So that as the caſe *now* ſtands with us, there are *Two* ſorts of Means that are neceſſary to our obtaining of Heaven; The firſt is the Practice of thoſe *Heavenly virtues*, in the Perfection whereof conſiſts the ſtate of Heaven; the Second is the Practice of certain *Inſtrumental Duties*, which are neceſſary to our acquiring thoſe Heavenly virtues, and overcoming the Difficulties of them. The firſt ſort of theſe are the *proximate* Means, thoſe which directly and immediately reſpect the Great and Ultimate End; The ſecond the more *remote* Means, which immediately reſpect thoſe Means that immediately reſpect the *End*. The firſt is like the Art of the *Builder* which immediately reſpects the Houſe; The ſecond like the Art of the *Smith*, which immediately reſpects the *Means* and *Inſtruments* of Building.

I. One ſort of Means neceſſary to the obtaining of Heaven, and that which more *directly* and *immediately* reſpects it, is the *Practice* of thoſe *Virtues* in the Perfection whereof the Heavenly Life conſiſts. For we find by experience that all Heavenly Virtues are to be acquired and perfected only by *Practice*; That as all *bad* Diſpoſitions are acquired and improved into Habits by *bad* Practices and Cuſtoms, ſo are all the contrary *virtuous* ones by the *contrary* Practices. For *Religion* proceeds in the methods of *Nature*, and carries us on from

from the *Acts* to the *Diſpoſitions*, and from the *Diſpoſitions* to the *Habits* of Virtue. And by the ſame method the *Divine Grace* which accompanies Religion, does ordinarily work its Effects upon the ſpirits of men, not by an *inſtantaneous Infuſion* of virtuous Habits into the Will, but by perſwading them to the *Practice* of thoſe *Virtues* that are contrary to their *vicious Habits*, and to perſiſt in the practice of them till they have mortified *thoſe* Habits, and throughly habituated and inured themſelves to *theſe*. So that the Grace of God is like a *Graff*, which though it is put into a *Stock* which is quite of *another* kind, doth yet make uſe of the Faculties and Juices of the Stock, and ſo by co-operating with them, converts it by degrees into its *own* Nature. And this is exactly agreeable to the common experience of men, who in the beginning of their Reformation are ſo far from acting vertuouſly from *Habit* and *Inclination*, that it goes againſt the very *Grain* of their Nature, and they would much rather return to their vicious courſes, if they were not chaſed and purſued by the *Terrors* of an *awakened Conſcience*; and when afterwards they come to act upon a more *ingenuous* Principle, yet ſtill they find in themſelves a great *Averſeneſs* and *Reluctancy* to it, and 'tis a great while uſually ere they arrive to a *Habit* or *Facility* of acting *virtuouſly*. But then by *perſeverance* in the practice of Virtue they are more and more *inclined* and *diſpoſed* to it, and ſo by degrees it becomes *eaſie* and *natural* to them. If therefore we would ever arrive to that Perfection of Virtue which the Heavenly State implies, it muſt be by the *Practice* of Virtue, by a continual *training* and *exerciſing*

exerciſing our ſelves in all the parts of the Heavenly Life, which by degrees will *wear off* the *Difficulty* of it, and *adapt* and *familiarize* our Nature to it. Ἃ γὰρ δεῖ μανθάνοντας ποιεῖν, ταῦτα ποιοῦντες μανθάνομεν: *Thoſe things which they that learn ought to do, they learn by doing them.* Thus we learn Devotion by Prayer, Submiſſion to God by Denying our ſelves, Charity by giving Alms, and Meekneſs by Forgiving Injuries. And we may as reaſonably expect to commence *learned* without *ſtudy*, as *virtuous* without the *Practice* of Virtue. Since therefore the Formal Happineſs of our reaſonable Natures conſiſts in the Perfection of all the Heavenly virtues, and 'tis by theſe alone that we can reliſh and enjoy the bliſsful Objects of Heaven; it hence follows, that the *Practice* of thoſe virtues is the moſt *direct* and *immediate* Means to obtain the *Bleſſed End* of our Religion. But then,

II. Another ſort of Means neceſſary to our obtaining of Heaven conſiſts of certain *Inſtrumental Duties* by which we are to *acquire*, *improve*, and *perfect* theſe *Heavenly Virtues*. What theſe *Means* are will be hereafter largely ſhown: All that I ſhall ſay of them at preſent is, That they are ſuch as are no farther good and uſeful, than as they are the *Means* of Heavenly Virtue, and do tend towards the *acquiring*, *improving*, and *perfecting* it. For the whole Duty of Man may be diſtributed into theſe *Two Generals*, *viz.* The Religion of the *End*, and the Religion of the *Means*. The Religion of the *End*, contains all that *Heavenly Virtue* wherein the *Perfection* and *Happineſs* of Humane Nature conſiſts; and this the *Apoſtle* diſtributes into three particulars, *viz.* *Sobriety*, *Righteouſneſs*,

ouſneſs, and *Godlineſs*. The Religion of the *Means* comprehends all that *Duty* which does either *naturally*, or by *Inſtitution*, reſpect and drive at this Religion of the *End*; and that all other Duty, that is not it ſelf a Natural Branch and Part of it, doth reſpect and drive at it, the *Apoſtle* aſſures us, when he tells us that the *Goſpel* or *Grace of God*, was revealed from Heaven for this very purpoſe, to teach us to *deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, and righteouſly and godly in this preſent world.* And if we do not uſe the Religion of the *Means* to this purpoſe, it is altogether *uſeleſs* and *inſignificant*. For the purpoſe of all *Religious Duties* is either,

1. To *reconcile* men to God, and God to them, or,
2. To *perfect* the Humane Nature; or,
3. To *intitle* men to Heaven; or,
4. To *qualifie* and *diſpoſe* them for the Heavenly Life. To neither of which the Religion of the *Means* is any farther uſeful than as it produces and promotes in us thoſe *Heavenly Virtues* which are implied in the Religion of the *End*. For,

I. It is no further uſeful towards the *reconciling* Us to God, and God to Us. For there can be no hearty *Reconciliation* between adverſe parties without there be a mutual *Likeneſs*, and *Agreement* of Natures. Now the *Carnal Mind*, (which includes all that is repugnant to the *Heavenly Virtues*) the *Apoſtle* tells us, is *Enmity againſt God*, *Rom.* vii. 17. that is, hath a natural *Antipathy* to the *Purity* and *Goodneſs* of the Divine Nature. And this *Antipathy* the ſame *Apoſtle* tells us, is founded in our *wicked works*, *Coloſſ.* i. 21. So that though

though we ſhould practiſe never ſo diligently all that is contained in the Religion of the *Means*, though we ſhould *pray*, and *hear* and *receive Sacraments*, &c. with never ſo much Zeal and Conſtancy, yet all this will be inſignificant, as to the *reconciling* our Natures to God, unleſs it deſtroy in us that *Carnal Mind* and thoſe *wicked Works* which render us ſo averſe to his *Goodneſs*. And though God bears a *hearty good Will* to all that are capable of *Good*, and *embraces* his whole Creation with the out-ſtretched Arms of his *Benevolence*, yet he cannot be ſuppoſed to be *pleaſed* with, or *delighted* in any but ſuch as *reſemble* Him in thoſe amiable Graces of *Purity* and *Goodneſs* for which he loves *Himſelf*. For he loves not *Himſelf* meerly becauſe he is *Himſelf* (which would be a *blind Inſtinct*, rather than a *Reaſonable Love*) but becauſe He is *Good*; and he loves Himſelf above all *other* things, becauſe he knows Himſelf to be the *Higheſt* and moſt *Perfect* Good: and conſequently He loves all other things proportionably as they *approach* and *reſemble* Him in Goodneſs. And indeed if He loved *Us* for any other Reaſon beſides that for which he loves *Himſelf*; he would not have *infinite Reaſon* to love *Himſelf*; becauſe he would not have *that* Reaſon to love *Himſelf* for which he loves and takes delight in *Us*. Since therefore there is nothing but our *Reſemblance* of God can *reconcile* Him to Us, and ſince our *Reſemblance* of Him conſiſts in *Virtue* and true *Goodneſs*, it hence follows that all the Religion of the *Means* is inſignificant to our *Reconciliation* with God, if it doth not render us truly *virtuous*. So that till this is effected, there is ſo vaſt a *Gulph* between

between God and Us, that neither *We* can go to *Him*, nor *He* come to *Us*; and unleſs he alter his Nature by becoming *impure* as we are *impure*, or we alter ours by becoming *pure* as He is *pure*, there will be ſo immenſe a *Diſtance* between Him and Us, as that it is impoſſible we ſhould ever *meet* and *agree*. So that what the *Prophet* ſaith of *Sacrifice* may be truly affirm'd of all Religion of the *Means*, *Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams, or with ten thouſands of Rivers of Oil?* Will he be reconciled upon our bare *believing*, *praying*, or *receiving Sacraments*, &c. No, no; *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Micah vi. 7, 8.

II. This Religion of the *Means* is of no farther uſe as to the *perfecting* our Natures, than as it is inſtrumental to produce and promote in us thoſe *Heavenly Virtues* which are implied in the Religion of the *End*. For doubtleſs to be a Perfect Man is to live up to the Higheſt Principle of Humane Nature, which is *Reaſon*; and till we are once releaſed from the ſlavery of *Senſe* and *Paſſion*, and all our Powers of Action are ſo ſubdued to this *ſuperiour* Principle as to be wholly *regulated* by it, and we *chuſe* and *refuſe*, and *love* and *hate*, and *hope* and *fear*, and *deſire* and *delight*, according as right Reaſon directs, we are in a *maimed* and *imperfect* Condition. Now what elſe is *Virtue* but a Habit of Living according to the *Laws* of *Reaſon*, or of demeaning our ſelves towards God, our ſelves, and all the Word, as beſt becomes *Rational Beings* placed in our Condition and Circumſtances? And till we are in ſome meaſure arrived

to

to this, our Nature is ſo far from being *perfect*, that it is the moſt *wretched* and *confuſed* thing in the whole world; A mere undiſtinguiſhed *Chaos*, where *Frigida cum Calidis*, Senſe and Reaſon, Brute and Man, are ſhuffled together without any order, like a confounded Heap of Ruines. And therefore as for this Religion of the *Means*, it will be altogether inſignificant to the *Perfection* of our Natures, unleſs by the practice of it we do acquire a habit of acting according to the *Law* of our *Reaſon*, which *Habit* includes all *Heavenly Virtue*. For conſtantly to *know* and *do* what is beſt and moſt reaſonable, is the very Crown and Perfection of every *reaſonable Nature*; and therefore ſo far as our *Faith* and *Conſideration*, our *Sorrow* for *Sin* and the other *Inſtrumentals* of Religion, promote this *Heavenly Habit* in us, ſo far are they *perfective* of our Nature, and no *farther*.

III. This Religion of the *Means* is of no farther Uſe to Us as to the *Entitling* us to Heaven, than as it is productive of thoſe *Heavenly Virtues* which the Religion of the *End* implies. For our *Title* to Heaven depending wholly upon Gods *Promiſe*, muſt immediately reſult from our performance of thoſe *Conditions* upon which he hath *promiſed* it; which till we have done, we can have no more *Claim* or *Title* to it than if he had never *promiſed* it at all. But the ſole Condition upon which he hath *promiſed* it, is Univerſal Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs; for ſo, *without Holineſs*, we are aſſured that *no man ſhall ſee God*; and *Matt.* v. our Saviour intails all the Beatitudes of Heaven upon thoſe Heavenly Virtues of *Purity* of *Heart*, *Benignity* of *Temper*, &c. So alſo *Rom.* ii. 7. the Promiſe

Promiſe of Eternal Life is limited to our *Patient Continuance in well-doing*. And that we may know before hand what to truſt to, our Saviour plainly tells us, that *not every one that cries, Lord, Lord*, that makes ſolemn *Prayers* and *Addreſſes* to me, *ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven*; And, *this is the will of God*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *even our Sanctification*; that is, our being purged from all Impurities of Fleſh and Spirit, and inſpired with all Heavenly Virtues. And the Apoſtle expreſly enumerates thoſe Virtues upon which our Entrance into Eternal Life is promiſed, 2 *Pet.* i. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Add to your Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, and to Temperance Patience, and to Patience Godlineſs, and to Godlineſs Brotherly Kindneſs, and to Brotherly Kindneſs Charity*; *For if theſe things be in you, and abound*, ſaith he, *they make you that you ſhall neither be barren or unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, That you ſhall receive the proper *Fruit* of that *Knowledge*, which is Eternal Life; for thus *v.* xi. he goes on, *For ſo*, or upon this Condition, *an entrance ſhall be miniſtred unto you abundantly into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*. So that unleſs our Faith purifies our Hearts, and works by Love; unleſs our ſorrow for Sin works in us Repentance, or a Change of Mind; unleſs our Prayers raiſe in us Divine and Heavenly Affections, that is, unleſs we ſo practiſe the *Duties* of the Religion of the *Means* as thereby to acquire the *Virtues* of the Religion of the *End*, it will be all as inſignificant to our *Title* to Heaven, as the moſt *indifferent* Actions in the World.

IV. This Religion of the *Means* is of no farther Uſe to the *diſpoſing* and *qualifying* us for Heaven, than as it is an effectual means of the Religion of the *End*. Which is a perfectly diſtinct Conſideration from the former; For it would be no advantage to us to have a *Right* to Heaven, unleſs we were antecedently *qualified* and *diſpoſed* for it. Becauſe Pleaſure which is a Relative thing, implies a *Correſpondence* and *Agreement* between the *Object* and the *Faculty* that taſts and enjoys it. But in the *Temper* of every wicked Mind there is a ſtrong *Antipathy* to the Pleaſures of Heaven; which being all *chaſte*, and *pure*, and *ſpiritual*, can never agree with the vitiated Palat of a *baſe* and *degenerate* Soul. For what concord can there be between a *ſpiteful* and *deviliſh* Spirit and the Fountain of all *Love* and *Goodneſs?* between a *ſenſual* and *carnalized* one, that underſtands no other Pleaſures but only thoſe of the Fleſh, and thoſe *Pure* and *Virgin* Spirits that neither *eat* nor *drink*, but live for ever upon *Wiſdom* and *Holineſs*, and *Love*, and *Contemplation*? Certainly till our Mind is *contempered* to the heavenly State, and we are of the ſame *diſpoſition* with God, and Angels, and Saints, there is no Pleaſure in Heaven that can be agreeable to us. For, as for the *main*, we ſhall be of the ſame *Temper* and *Diſpoſition* when we come into the *other* World, as we are when we leave *this*; it being unimaginable how a *Total Change* ſhould be wrought in *us* meerly by paſſing out of *one* World into *another*. And therefore as in *this* world it is *Likeneſs* that does *congregate* & *aſſociate* Beings together; ſo doubtleſs it is in the *other* too. So that if we carry with us *thither* our *wicked* and *devilliſh*

devilliſh diſpoſitions (as we ſhall doubtleſs do, unleſs we *ſubdue* and *mortifie* them here) there will be no Company fit for us to aſſociate with, but only the *devilliſh* and *damned* Ghoſts of wicked men, with whom our wretched Spirits being already *joyned*, by a likeneſs of Nature, will mingle themſelves, as ſoon as ever they are excommunicated from the ſociety of Mortals. For whither ſhould they flock, but to the Birds of their own Feather? with whom ſhould they aſſociate, but with thoſe *malignant* Spirits to whom they are already joyned by a Community of Nature? So that ſuppoſing that when they land in Eternity, it were left to their own Liberty to go to *Heaven* or *Hell*, into the ſociety of the *Bleſſed* or the *Damned*; it is plain that Heaven would be no place for them, that the Air of that *bright* Region of *eternal Day* would never agree with their *black* and *helliſh* Natures. For, alas! what ſhould they do among thoſe *Bleſſed Beings* that inhabit it, to whoſe God-like Natures, Divine Contemplations, and Heavenly Employments, they have ſo great a *Repugnancy* and *Averſation?* So that beſides the having a *Right* to Heaven, it is neceſſary to our enjoying it that we ſhould be antecedently *diſpoſed* and *qualified* for it. And it being thus, God hath been graciouſly pleaſed to make thoſe very Virtues the *Conditions* of our *Right* to Heaven which are the proper *Diſpoſitions* and *Qualifications* of our Spirits for it; that ſo with one and the ſame Labour we might *entitle* our ſelves to, and *qualifie* our ſelves to enjoy it.

Now (as we ſhewed you before) the *Condition* of our *Right* to Heaven, is our *practiſing*

thoſe Heavenly Virtues which are implied in the Religion of the *End*; and as the Religion of the *Means* no further *entitles* us to Heaven than as it produces and promotes in us thoſe Heavenly Virtues, ſo it no further *qualifies* us for it. For when the Soul goes into Eternity, it leaves the Religion of the *Means* behind it, and carries nothing with it but only thoſe Heavenly *Virtues* and *Diſpoſitions* which it here acquired by thoſe *Means*. For as for *Faith* and *Conſideration*, *Hearing* of Gods *Word*, and *Receiving* of *Sacraments*, &c. they are all but Scaffolds to that heavenly Building of inward *Purity* and *Goodneſs*; and when this is once finiſhed for Eternity, then muſt thoſe Scaffolds all go down, as things of no further Uſe or Neceſſity. But as for the *Graces* of the *Mind*, they are to ſtand for ever, to be the Receptacles and Habitations of all heavenly Pleaſure. And hence the Apoſtle tells us, that of thoſe three Chriſtian Graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity, *Charity* (which in the largeſt ſenſe of it comprehends *all* Heavenly Virtue) is the greateſt; becauſe the Two former, being but *Means* of *Charity*, ſhall ceaſe in Heaven, and be ſwallowed up for ever in *Viſion* and *Enjoyment*; but *Charity*, ſaith he, *never faileth*, 1 Cor. xii. 13.

By all which it is apparent that the Religion of the *Means* is no further uſeful to us, than as it is apt to produce and promote in us thoſe heavenly Virtues, the practice of which is the moſt *direct* and *immediate* Means to the ultimate *End* of a Chriſtian. Wherefore as a man may *knock* and *file*, and yet be no *Mechanick*, though the *Hammer* and *File* with which he does it are very uſeful Tools

Tools to the making of any curious *Machine*; ſo a man may *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive Sacraments*, &c. And yet be a very Bungler in the bleſſed Trade of a Heavenly Life. For though it is true, theſe are excellent *Means* of Heavenly Living, yet as the Art of the *Mechanick* conſiſts not in *uſing* his Tools, but in uſing them in *ſuch a manner*, as is neceſſary to the perfecting and accompliſhing his Work; So the Art of one that pretends to the Heavenly Life, conſiſts not barely in *praying* and *hearing*, &c. but in uſing theſe *Means* with that Religious *Skill* and *Artifice* which is neceſſary to render them effectually ſubſervient to the *Ends* of *Piety* and *Virtue*.

And thus I have given a general Account of the *Means* which are neceſſary to our obtaining of Heaven, and which, as I have ſhewed, are either ſuch as tend more *directly* and *immediately* to it, or ſuch as more *remotely* reſpect it. The firſt is the Practice of thoſe *Heavenly Virtues* in the Perfection whereof the Happineſs of Heaven conſiſts; the ſecond is the Practiſing of thoſe *Duties* which are neceſſary to our acquiring and perfecting thoſe *Heavenly Virtues*. And of theſe two Parts conſiſts the whole *Chriſtian Life*; which takes in not only all thoſe *Virtues* that are to be practiſed by us in Heaven, but alſo all thoſe *Duties*, by which we are to overcome the Difficulty of thoſe Virtues, and to acquire and perfect them. The firſt of theſe, for Diſtinction ſake, we will call the *Heavenly Part* of the *Chriſtian Life*, it being that part of it which we ſhall lead in *Heaven*, after we have learnt it here upon *Earth*; The ſecond I ſhall call the *Warfaring* or *Militant Part* of the *Chriſtian*

Life, which is peculiar to our *Earthly State*, wherein we are to contend and ſtrive with the manifold Difficulties which attend us in the Exerciſe of thoſe *Heavenly Virtues*. Both which, I conceive, are implied in thoſe words of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* i. 27. *Only let your Converſation be as becometh the Goſpel*; where the Greek word πολιτεύεσθε, which we render, *Let your Converſation be*, ſtrictly ſignifies, *behaving our ſelves as Citizens*; or which, if we may have leave to coin a word, may be fitly rendered, *Citizen it as becomes the Goſpel*. For the word implies that thoſe of whom he ſpeaks, were *Denizens* of ſome *Free City*; for ſo the word πολίτευμα, which *Phil.* iii. 20. is rendered *Converſation*, ſtrictly denotes a *Citizenſhip*, from πολῖται, *Citizens*; and is of the ſame import with πολιτεία, which *Acts* xxii. 28. is tranſlated a *Freedom*, *i. e.* of the City of *Rome*; which denotes the State and Condition of thoſe, who, though they dwelt *out* of that City, and ſometimes *remote* from it, had yet the *Jus Civitatis Romanæ*, the *Priviledges* of it belonging to them. For thus *Cicero* deſcribes it, *Omnibus Municipibus duas eſſe Patrias, unam Naturæ, alteram Juris, Catonis Exemplo, qui Tuſculi natus, in Populi Romani Societatem ſuſceptus eſt*: *i. e.* "All ſuch as are made free of the City have "two Countries, one of Nature, the other of "Law; as *Cato*, for inſtance, who was born at "*Tuſculum*, and afterwards admitted a Citizen "of *Rome*. Which exactly agrees with the Nature of this Heavenly πολίτευμα, or *Citizenſhip*, which the *Apoſtle* here attributes to Chriſtians, who though they belong at preſent to *another Country*, and live a great way off from the *Heavenly*

Heavenly City; have as yet no *Domicilium in Urbe*, no actual poſſeſſion of any of its bleſſed Manſions; are notwithſtanding *Free Denizens* of it, and have by Covenant a Right to all thoſe bleſſed *Priviledges* which its Inhabitants do actually enjoy. From whence it is evident, that the πολιτεύεσθε, in that Text, refers to their being *Citizens* of Heaven, and as *ſuch*, it earneſtly exhorts them to behave themſelves; to live as thoſe who being now in a remote Country are yet συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων, as the *Apoſtle* expreſſes it, *Eph.* ii. 19. *i. e. Fellow-Citizens with the Saints above*; that are *connaturaliz'd* with them into that Heavenly *Commonwealth*. And being thus underſtood, the Apoſtles Advice will comprehend it in *both* thoſe kinds of *Means* which I have before deſcribed. For, to live as *Citizens* of Heaven, is, Firſt, to live like thoſe who are the *Inhabitants* of Heaven, to imitate their bleſſed *Manners* and *Behaviour*, in doing the Will of God upon *Earth*, as it is done by them in *Heaven*; and this takes in the *Practice* of all thoſe *Heavenly Virtues* of which the Religion of the *End* conſiſts: Secondly, To live like thoſe that have a πολίτευμα or *Citizenſhip* in Heaven, that are *entitled* by Covenant to the *Priviledges* and *Immunities* of it, but are as yet to win its *Poſſeſſion* by a continual *Warfare* and *Contention* with thoſe manifold Difficulties and Oppoſitions which lie in our way to it; and this takes in the *Practice* of all thoſe *Duties* in which the Religion of the *Means* conſiſts. To live *like Chriſtians* therefore, or *as becomes the Goſpel*, is to live in the continual Uſe of both kinds of the *Means* of Happineſs. So that the *Chriſtian Converſation* conſiſting of theſe

Two, is the only *full* and *Adequate* Means by which *Heaven* can be obtained.

But that I may make this more fully appear, I ſhall conſider theſe two parts of it *diſtinctly*, and indeavour to ſhew how effectually each of them doth contribute in its kind, to our obtaining the Happineſs of Heaven. And firſt, I ſhall begin with the *Proximate* Means, *viz.* The *Practice* of all thoſe *Heavenly Virtues*, which are implied in the Religion of the *End*, and do make the *Heavenly Part* of the CHRISTIAN LIFE.

CHAP. III.

Concerning the Heavenly Part *of the* Chriſtian Life, *which is the* Proximate Means *of obtaining Heaven*; *ſhewing what* Virtues *it conſiſts of, and how much every* Virtue *contributes to the Happineſs of* Heaven.

VIRTUE in the general, conſiſts in a *ſuitable Behaviour* to the *State* and *Capacities* in which we are placed; Now *Man*, who is the Subject of that *Virtue* we are here diſcourſing of, is to be conſidered under a threefold *Capacity*. The

Firſt, Is of a *Rational Animal*; the

Second, Of a Rational Animal related to *God*; the

Third,

Third, Of a Rational Animal related to all *other Creatures.*

And theſe are the only capacities of Virtue that are in Humane Nature: So that all the Virtues we are obliged to, and capable of, conſiſt in behaving our ſelves ſuitable to the State and Condition of *Rational Animals*, that are related to *God* and their *Fellow Creatures.*

By which three Capacities of our Nature, the Virtue or *Suitableneſs* of *Behaviour* which we ſtand obliged to, is diſtinguiſhed into three kinds, *viz.*

The *Humane*,
The *Divine*, and
The *Social.*

Humane Virtue conſiſts in behaving our ſelves ſuitably to the State and Capacity of mere *Rational Animals:*

Divine Virtue conſiſts in behaving our ſelves ſuitably to the Condition of Rational Animals related to *God:*

Social Virtue conſiſts in behaving our ſelves ſuitably to the Capacity of Rational Animals related to their *Fellow Creatures*, but eſpecially to *Rational Creatures* that are of the ſame Claſs and Society with us.

That I may therefore proceed more diſtinctly in this Argument, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew what thoſe *Virtues* of the *Chriſtian Life* are, which are proper to a man in each of theſe *Capacities*; and how much each of thoſe *Virtues* contributes to the *Happineſs* of *Heaven.*

SECT.

SECT. I.

Concerning thoſe Humane Virtues *which belong to a* Man *as he is a* Reaſonable Animal, *ſhewing that they are all included in the* Heavenly Part *of the* Chriſtian Life, *and that the Practice of them effectually conduces to our future Happineſs.*

Firſt we will conſider Man in the Capacity of a meer *Rational Animal*, that is compounded of contrary Principles, *viz. Spirit* and *Matter*, or a *Rational Soul* and *Humane Body*; by which Compoſition He is, as it were, the Buckle of both Worlds, in whom the *Spiritual* and *Material* World are *claſped* and united together; and partaking, as he does, of both Extreams, of *Spirit* and of *Matter*, of *Angel* and *Brute*, there ariſe within him from thoſe contrary Natures contrary Propenſions, *viz. Rational* and *Senſual*, or *Angelical* and *Brutiſh*; and in the due Subordination of theſe his *Senſual* to his *Rational* Propenſions, conſiſts all Humane Virtue.

For his *Reaſon* being the nobleſt Principle of his Nature, muſt be ſuppoſed to be implanted in him by God to *rule* and *govern* him, to be an *Eye* to his blind and brutiſh Affections, to *correct* the Errors of his Imagination, to *bound* the Extravagancies of his Appetites, and *regulate* the whole Courſe of his Actions; ſo as that he may do nothing that is deſtructive or injurious to this excellent Frame and Structure of his Nature. But now in this compounded Nature of a Man, there are his *Concupiſcible* and *Iraſcible Affections*: with the

firſt

firſt of which he deſires and purſues his *Pleaſures*; and with the ſecond, he ſhuns and avoids his *Dangers*; and there are alſo *Bodily Appetites*, ſuch as Hunger, Thirſt, and Carnal Concupiſcence; and together with theſe a *Self-Eſteem* and *Valuation*; all which are the natural Subjects of his Reaſon, and indeed the only Subjects upon which it is to exerciſe its Dominion. So that in the well and ill Government of *theſe*, conſiſts all *Humane Virtue* and *Vice*. To the perfect well governing therefore of a mans ſelf, there are Five things indiſpenſably neceſſary.

1. That he ſhall impartially conſult his *Reaſon* what is abſolutely beſt for him, and by what means it is beſt attainable, and then *conſtantly* purſue what it propoſes and directs him to. For ſo far as he is wanting in this, he caſts off the Government of his *Reaſon*.

2. That he ſhould proportion his *Concupiſcible* Affections to the juſt value which his *Reaſon* ſets upon thoſe things which he *affects*: For every Degree of Affection which exceeds the merit of Things, is *irrational*, and conſequently injurious to our *Rational Nature*.

3. That he ſhould not ſuffer his *Iraſcible* Affections to exceed thoſe Evils and Dangers which he would *avoid*: For if he doth, *they* will prove greater Evils to him than *thoſe* Evils or Dangers are which raiſe and provoke them.

4. That he ſhould not indulge his *Bodily Appetites* to the Hurt and Prejudice of his *Rational Nature*: For if he does, he will violate the *nobler*, for the ſake of the *viler* Part of himſelf. And

5. That

5. That upon the whole, he ſhould maintain a *Modeſt Opinion* of himſelf; and not think better of his own *Conduct* and *Management* of himſelf than it deſerves: For by ſo doing, he will be apt to over-look his own *Miſgovernments*, and ſo incapacitate himſelf for any farther *Improvements*. And in theſe five Particulars conſiſts all that Virtue which belongs to a man, conſidered merely in the Capacity of a *Rational Animal:*

The Firſt is the Virtue of *Prudence*,
The Second is the Virtue of *Moderation*,
The Third is the Virtue of *Fortitude*,
The Fourth is the Virtue of *Temperance*,
The Fifth is the Virtue of *Humility*.

All which, as I ſhall ſhew, are Eſſential Parts of the *Chriſtian Life*, and ſuch as do effectually contribute to our *Heavenly Happineſs*.

I. *Prudence*. And this is the *Root* and *Ground-Work* of all other Virtues; 'Tis this that gives *Law* and *Scope* to all our Motions, that propoſes the *Ends*, and preſcribes the *Meaſures* of our Actions. For *Prudence* conſiſts in being guided and directed by *Right Reaſon*, as it propoſes to us the worthieſt *Ends*, and directs us to the fitteſt and moſt effectual *Means* of obtaining them. So that to live *prudently*, is to live in the conſtant *Exerciſe* of our *Reaſon*, and to be continually purſuing ſuch *Ends* as *Right Reaſon* propoſes, by ſuch *Means* as *Right Reaſon* directs us to, which is the proper Buſineſs of all the Virtues of Religion. And hence *Religion* in the Scripture is frequently called by the Name of *Wiſdom* or *Prudence*; *The Fear of the Lord that is Wiſdom*, ſaith *Job*, *and to depart*

depart from Evil, that is Underſtanding, Job xxviii. 28. And, *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wiſdom*, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* cxi. 10. where *the Fear of the Lord* comprehends all the *Acts* of *Religion*, which are therefore *wiſe* and *prudent*, becauſe they are the fitteſt *Means* to thoſe worthieſt *Ends* which *Right Reaſon* propoſes. So that to exerciſe our Reaſon in the *Search* and *Diſcovery* of what is abſolutely beſt for us, and to follow our Reaſon in the *Purſuit* and *Acqueſt* of what it diſcovers to be ſo, is that virtue of *Prudence* whereunto we ſtand obliged as we are *Rational Animals*.

For our Reaſon being the *nobleſt* Principle of our Nature, That by which we are raiſed above the Level of *Brutes*, yea, by which we are allied to *Angels*, and do border upon *God himſelf*, ought upon that account to be ſubmitted to, as the ſupreme *Regent* and *Directreſs* of all our other Powers, and to be looked upon as the *Rule* of our *Will*, and the *Guide* of all our *Animal Motions*. And when to gratifie our *ſenſual* Appetites, or *unreaſonable* Paſſions we either *neglect* thoſe *Ends* which our Reaſon propoſes to us, or *purſue* them by ſuch *Means* as our Reaſon diſallows of, we reverſe the very order of our Natures, and tread *Antipodes* to our ſelves; And while we do ſo, it is impoſſible we ſhould be happy, either *here*, or *hereafter*. For every thing you ſee, is diſeaſed while it is in an *unnatural* State and Condition, while its Parts are *diſplaced*, or put into a *Diſorder*, or *diſtorted* into an unnatural Figure. And ſo it is with a Man, who while he preſerves his Faculties in their natural *Station* and *Subordination* to each other, while

while he keeps his *Affections* and *Appetites* in ſubjection to his *Will*, and his *Will* to his *Reaſon*, he is *calm* and *quiet*, and enjoys within himſelf perpetual *Eaſe* and *Tranquillity*; But when once he *breaks* this order, and ſuffers his Paſſions or his Appetites to *uſurp* the Place of his Reaſon; to *impoſe* contrary *Ends* to it, or *preſcribe* contrary *Means*; his Faculties, like *disjoynted* Members, are in perpetual *Anguiſh* and *Anxiety*. And hence it is that in the Courſe of a wicked Life, we feel ſuch reſtleſs Contentions between our *Spirit* and *Fleſh*, between the *Law in our Minds*, and the *Law in our Members*; becauſe our Nature is out of *Tune*, and its Faculties are *diſplaced* and *diſordered*, and that ſovereign Principle of *Reaſon* which ſhould *ſway* and *govern* us, is *depoſed*, and made a *Vaſſal* to our *Appetites* and *Paſſions*. For in all our evil Courſes we *chuſe* and *refuſe*, *reſolve* and *act*, not as *Reaſon* directs us, but as *Senſe* and *Paſſion* biaſſes us; and our Reaſon having nothing to do in all this *Brutiſh Scene* of Action, either ſleeps it out, without minding or regarding, or elſe ſits by as an idle Spectator of it, and only *cenſures* and *condemns* it. And it is this that cauſes all that *Tumult* and *Conteſt* that is in our Natures; and till, by the Exerciſe of *Prudence*, our Faculties are reduced, and ſet in order again, our *Mind* will be like our *Body*, while its Bones are out of Joint, continually *reſtleß* and *unquiet*. And therefore to remove this great Indiſpoſition of our Nature to Happineſs, *Prudence* is required of us, as one of the principal *Virtues* of the *Heavenly Part* of the *Chriſtian Life*.

For

For thus our Saviour injoyns that we ſhould be *wiſe as Serpents* as well as *harmleſs as Doves*, Mat. x. 16. which though it be here preſcribed in a *particular* Caſe only, *viz.* that of *Perſecution*; yet ſince the Reaſon of it extends to *all other* Caſes, and it is fit we ſhould be Prudent in *all* our Undertakings as well as in *ſuffering Perſecution*, it is upon that account equivalent to an univerſal Command. So alſo *Eph.* v. 15. *See that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe*; *i. e.* In the whole Courſe of your Actions take heed that ye follow the Guidance of your *Reaſon*, and do not ſuffer your ſelves to be ſeduced by your blind *Paſſions* and *Appetites*, which are meer *Ignes Fatui*, or the *Guides* of *Fools*. And accordingly the Apoſtle prays for his Chriſtian *Coloſſians*, *That they might be filled with the Knowledge of God in all Wiſdom and ſpiritual Underſtanding*, Col. i. 9. *i. e.* That they might have ſuch a knowledge of Gods will as might render them truly *prudent*, and cauſe them to purſue the beſt *Ends* by the beſt *Means*. And though this Virtue ſeldom occurs in the new Teſtament under its own Name, yet, as in the above named places it is expreſſed by *Wiſdom*, ſo it is elſewhere by *Knowledge*, as particularly, 2 *Cor.* vi. 6. where he commands the Miniſters of the Church to approve themſelves ſuch by ſeveral Virtues, and particularly by *Pureneſs*, i. e. *Continence*, and by *Knowledge*, i. e. by *Prudence*. For, beſides that *Knowledge* as it ſignifies an *Underſtanding of Divine Things*, was not a *Virtue* in the Apoſtles, but a *Gift* of God, and ſo not proper to be enumerated amongſt theſe *Virtues*; there is hardly any Account to be given why the Apoſtle

ſhould

ſhould place *Knowledge* in the midſt of ſo many *Moral Virtues*, if he did not thereby mean the *Virtue* of *Prudence*, which is, as it were, the *Eye* and *Guide* of all the other *Virtues*. So again, 2 *Pet.* i. 6. where he bids us add to *Faith*, *Virtue*, *i. e.* Fortitude, or Conſtancy of Mind; *and to Virtue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance*; By *Knowledge* it is highly probable he means *Prudence*, becauſe he places it in the midſt of thoſe *two Virtues* which border neareſt upon *Prudence*.

Now that the Practice of *this Virtue* is a moſt proper and effectual *Means* of our *Everlaſting Happineſs*, is evident from hence; Becauſe the Practice of it is a conſtant Exerciſe of *Reaſon*. For to act *prudently* in Religion is to follow the *beſt* Reaſon; to aim at Heaven, which is the *beſt* end, and direct our Actions thither by the *beſt* Rules; 'Tis to conſult what is *beſt* for our ſelves, and how it may be *moſt effectually* obtained. In a word, it is to *intend* the *chiefeſt Good* above All, and to *level* our Lives and Actions moſt *directly* towards it. This is *Religious Prudence* in the *General*; and as for thoſe *Particulars* of it, which we are obliged to exercise in the ſeveral *States*, *Relations*, and *Circumſtances* wherein we are placed, they all conſiſt in doing what is moſt *fit* and *reaſonable* with reſpect to that Great and Bleſſed End.

For by living in the continual Practice of *Religious Prudence*, we ſhall by degrees habituate our ſelves to a Life of *Reaſon*, and ſhake off that drowſie Charm of *Senſe* and *Paſſion* which hangs upon our Minds, and renders our Faculties ſo *dull* and *unactive*; And having diſuſed our ſelves a while to obey their *blind* and *imperious* Dictates, our Reaſon

ſon will re-aſſume its Throne in us, and direct all our Aims and Endeavours to what is *Fitteſt* and moſt *Reaſonable*. For we being finite and limited Beings, cannot operate *divers* ways with *equal* vigour *at once*; and our rational and ſenſitive propenſions are made in ſuch a *regular* and *æquilibrious* order, that proportionably as the one does *increaſe* in activity, the others always *decay*; and ſo accordingly as we *abate* in the ſtrength of our *Brutiſh*, we ſhall *improve* in the vigour of our *Rational* Faculties. But to act ſutably to their Natures being the End of all our *Faculties* and *Powers of Action*, the God of Nature to excite them thereto, has founded all their *Pleaſure* in the *vigorous* Exerciſe of them upon *ſuitable* Objects. Since therefore our *Reaſon* is the beſt and nobleſt of all *Powers of Action*, to be ſure the greateſt *Pleaſure* we are capable of, muſt ſpring out of the Exerciſe of our *Reaſon*. Wherefore ſince *Prudence* conſiſts in the *Uſe* of our *Reaſon*, the Practice thereof muſt needs effectually contribute to our *Pleaſure* and *Happineſs*. For *Uſe* and *Exerciſe* will mightily *ſtrengthen* amd *improve* our Reaſon, and render it not only more *apprehenſive* of what is fit and reaſonable; but alſo more *perſwaſive* and *prevalent*; and when once it is improved into a *prevailing Principle* of Action, and hath acquired not only *Skill* enough to *preſcribe* what is right to us, but alſo *Power* enough to *perſwade* us to comply with its preſcriptions; to *chuſe* and *refuſe*, to *love* and *hate*, to *hope* and *fear*, *deſire* and *delight*, and regulate all our Actions by its Laws and Dictates, then are we entring upon our *Heaven* and *Happineſs*.

For that which makes us *unhappy* is, that our ſinful and unreaſonable Affections do ſo *hamper* and *intangle* us, that we cannot *freely* exerciſe our Faculties upon ſuch Objects as are moſt ſuitable to them; that our Minds and Wills are ſo *fettered* by our vicious Inclinations, that we cannot exert them upon that which is moſt worthy to be *Known* and *Choſen*, without a great deal of *Difficulty* and *Diſtraction*. But now under the Conduct of our *Reaſon* our Faculties will by Degrees recover their *Freedom*, and diſengage themſelves from thoſe vicious *Encumbrances* which do ſo *clog* and *interrupt* them in their Rational Motions. And when this is throughly effected, we are in full Poſſeſſion of the *Heavenly State*, which, as I have ſhewed, conſiſts in the *free* and *vigorous* Exerciſe of our Rational Faculties upon the *beſt* and *worthieſt* Objects. For when once our *Paſſions* and *Appetites* are perfectly ſubdued to our *Reaſon*, all our Rational Faculties will be *free*, and every one will move towards its proper Object without any *Lett* or *Hindrance*; our *Underſtanding* will be ſwallowed up in a fixt Contemplation of the *ſublimeſt Truth*; our *Wills*, entirely reſigned to the Choice and Embraces of the *trueſt Good*; our *Affections*, unalterably devoted to the Love and Fruition of the moſt *excellent Beauty and Perfection*; and in this conſiſts the Happy State of *Heaven*; So that to live *prudently*, or, which is the ſame, to govern our ſelves by our *Beſt Reaſon*, is both a *neceſſary* and *effectual* means of attaining to the *Heavenly State*.

II. Another Virtue which appertains to a Man, conſidered meerly as a *Rational Animal*, is *Mode-*

Moderation; which conſiſts in proportioning our *Concupiſcible* Affections to the juſt worth and value of Things; ſo as neither to ſpend our Affections *too prodigally* upon Trifles, nor yet be *over-ſparing* or *niggardly* of them to real and ſubſtantial Goods. But to *love*, *deſire*, and *expect* things more or leſs, according to the Eſtimate which our beſt and moſt impartial *Reaſon* makes of their Worth and Goodneſs. For he that affects things more than in the Eſteem of Reaſon they deſerve, affects them *irrationally*, and regulates his Paſſion by his *wild* and *extravagant* Imagination, and not by his *Reaſon* and *Judgment*. And while men do thus neglect their *Reaſon*, and accuſtom themſelves to *deſire*, and *love* and *affect* without it, they neceſſarily diſable themſelves to enjoy a *Rational Happineſs*. For, beſides that their Rational Faculties being thus *laid by*, and *unemployed*, will naturally contract *Ruſt*, and grow every day more *weak* and *reſtive*; Beſides, that their *unexerciſed* Reaſon will *melt away* in Sloth and Idleneſs, and all its vital Powers *freeze* for want of motion, and, like ſtanding water, *ſtagnate* and gather mire, and by degrees *corrupt* and *putrefie*, till at laſt it will be impoſſible to revive them to the *vigorous Exerciſe* and *Motion* wherein their Pleaſure and Happineſs conſiſts; Beſides this, I ſay, by habituating our ſelves to affect things *irrationally*, *i. e.* to love the *leaſt* Goods *moſt*, and the *greateſt leaſt*; we ſhall diſable our ſelves from enjoying *any* Goods, but only ſuch as cannot make us happy. For he that loves any Good more than it is worth, can never be happy in the enjoyment of it; becauſe he *thinks* there is more in it than he *finds*, and ſo is always

diſappointed in the *Fruition* of it. And the *Grief* of being diſappointed of what he *expects*, does commonly countervail the *Pleaſure* of what he *finds* and *enjoys*. While he is in the *purſuit* of any Good which he *inordinately* dotes upon, he is *wild* and *imaginative*; he ſwells with *Phantaſtick* Joys, and juggles himſelf into *Expectations*, that are as large and boundleſs as his *Deſires*; But when once he is *ſeized* of it, and finds how vaſtly the *Enjoyment* falls ſhort of his *Expectation*, his *Pleaſure* is preſently loſt in his *Diſappointment*, and ſo he remains as unſatisfied as ever. And thus if he were to ſpend an Eternity in ſuch *Purſuits* and *Enjoyments*, his Life would be nothing but an Everlaſting Succeſſion of *Expectations* and *Diſappointments*. So that all *inordinate* Affection deſtroys its own *Satisfaction*, and neceſſarily renders us by ſo many Degrees miſerable, as it exceeds the real worth and value of Things.

Beſides which alſo it is to be conſidered, that all theſe *leſſer* Goods which are the Objects of our *Extravagant* Affections, are things which we muſt ere long be for ever *deprived* of: For the *leſſer* Goods are thoſe, which are only good for the *worſer* Part of us, that is, for our *Body* and *Animal Life*; the proper Goods whereof are the *Outward*, *Senſitive* Enjoyments of this World: All which, when we leave this world we muſt leave *for ever*, and go away into Eternity, with nothing about us, but only the Good, or Bad *Diſpoſitions* of our Souls. So that if our Soul be *carnalized* through our *immoderate* Affection to the things of this World, we ſhall carry that *Affection* with us, but leave the things which we thus vehe-

vehemently *affect* behind us for ever. For that which is the *prevailing Temper* of Souls in this Life, will doubtleſs be ſo in the other too; ſo far is that of the Poet true,

-----Quæ gratia currûm
Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes
Paſcere equos, eadem ſequitur tellure repoſtos.

For though the coming into the other world will queſtionleſs *improve* thoſe Souls which are *really good* before, yet it is not to be imagined how it ſhould *create* thoſe *good* who are *habitually bad*; and if we *retain* in the *other* world that *Prevailing Affection* to theſe ſenſitive Goods which we *contracted* in *this*, it muſt neceſſarily render us unſpeakably *miſerable* there. For every *Luſt* the Soul carries into the other world, will, by being eternally ſeparated from its *Pleaſures*, convert into an *Hopeleſs Deſire*, and upon that account grow more *furious* and *impatient*. For of all the Torments of the mind I know none that is comparable to that of an outragious *Deſire* joyned with *Deſpair* of Satisfaction; which is juſt the caſe of ſenſual and worldly minded Souls in the other Life where they are full of *ſharp* and *unrebated* Deſires, and like ſtarved men that are ſhut up between two Dead Walls are tormented with a *fierce*, but *hopeleſs* Hunger, which having nothing elſe to feed on, preys and quarries on *themſelves*; and in this deſolate condition they are forced to wander to and fro, tormented with a reſtleſs *Rage*, an Hungry and Unſatisfied *Deſire*, craving Food, but neither *finding*, nor *expecting* any; and ſo in unexpreſſible

Anguiſh they pine away a long Eternity. And though they might find content and ſatisfaction, could they but *divert* their Affections another way, and reconcile them to the Heavenly Enjoyments; yet being irrecoverably preingaged to ſenſual Goods, they have no Savour or Reliſh of any thing elſe, but are like *Feveriſh Tongues* that diſguſt and nauſeate the moſt grateful Liquors by reaſon of their own *overflowing Gall.* So impoſſible is it for men to be happy, either here or hereafter, ſo long as their Affections to the leſſer Goods of this World do ſo immoderately exceed the worth and value of them.

One Eſſential Part therefore of the *Chriſtian Life*, which is the Great *Means* of our Happineſs, is the Virtue of *Moderation*; the peculiar Office whereof is to bound our *Concupiſcible* Affections, and proportion them to the Intrinſic Worth of thoſe outward Goods which we *affect* and *deſire.* For though the word *Moderation*, according to our preſent Acceptation of it, be no where to be found in the New Teſtament; yet the Virtue expreſſed by it, is frequently enjoyned; as particularly where we are forbid to *ſet our Affections upon the Things of the Earth*, Col. iii. 2. *To love the World or the Things that are in the world*, 1 Joh. ii. 15. Which Phraſes are not to be ſo underſtood as if we were not to love the Enjoyments of the World *at all*; for they are the Bleſſings of God, and ſuch as he has propoſed to us in his Promiſes as the *Rewards* and *Encouragements* of our Obedience; and to be ſure, he would never encourage us to obey him by the Hope of ſuch Rewards as are *unlawful* for us to deſire and love: The meaning therefore

of

of these Prohibitions is, that we should so *moderate* our Affections to the world, as not to permit them to exceed the Real Worth and Value of its Enjoyments. For it is not *simply* our loving it, but our loving it to *such a Degree* as is inconsistent with our Love of God that is here forbidden; For *he that loveth the world*, saith St. *John*, *the Love of the Father is not in him*, *i. e.* he that loves it to such a Degree as to *prefer* the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of it *before God* and his *Duty* to him, hath no real Love to God, *i. e.* he loves not God, *as God*, as the Chiefest Good and Supreme Beauty and Perfection. And hence *Covetousness*, which is an immoderate Desire of the world, is called *Idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. because it sets the world in the place of God, and gives it that supreme Degree of Affection which is only due to him; and this the Apostle there calls *Inordinate Affection*, because it extravagantly exceeds the Intrinsic Worth and Value of its Objects. Wherefore we are strictly enjoyned to *take heed and beware of Covetousness*, Luke xii. 15. And to *let our Conversation be without Covetousness*, Heb. xiii. 5. By all which and sundry other Commands and Prohibitions of the Gospel, the *Moderation* of our *Concupiscible* Affections is made a necessary part of the *Christian Life*.

Now that this also mightily contributes to our Acquisition of the *Heavenly Happiness*, is evident, not only from what hath been already said, but also from hence, that till our Affections are thus *moderated*, we can have no Savour or Relish of the *Heavenly Enjoyments*. For in this corrupt State of our Nature, we generally *understand* by

our *Affections*, which like *coloured Glass*, represent all Objects to us in their own *Hue* and *Complexion*. When therefore a mans *Affections* are immoderately carried out towards worldly things, they will be sure by Degrees to corrupt and deprave his *Judgment*, and render him as unfit to judge of divine and spiritual Enjoyments, as a *Plowman* is to be a *Moderator* in the *Schools*. For when a mans thoughts have been employed another way, and the Delights of *Sense* have for a long while preoccupied his *understanding*, he will judge things to be *Good* or *Evil* according as they *disgust*, or *gratifie* his lower Appetites: and this being the Standard by which he measures things, 'tis impossible he should have any Savour of those *Spiritual Goods* in which the Happiness of Heaven consists. For though in his Nature there is a Tendency to *Rational Pleasures*, yet this he may, and very frequently does, stifle and extinguish by addicting himself wholly to the Delights and Gratifications of his *Sense*, which by degrees will so melt down his *Rational* inclinations into his *Sensual*, and confound and mingle them with his *Carnal* Appetites, that his *Soul* will wholly sympathize with his *Body*, and have all *Likes* and *Dislikes* in common with it; And there is nothing will be capable of pleasing the *One*, but what does gratifie the unbounded Liquorishness of the *Other*.

Now to such a Soul the Spiritual World must needs be a *barren wilderness*, where no good grows that it can live upon, none but what is nauseous and distasteful to its *coarse* and *vitiated* Palate; where there are noble Entertainments indeed for

Minds

Minds that are *contempered* to them, that have already tasted and experienced them; but not one Drop of Water to cool the Tip of a *Sensual* Tongue, or gratifie the Thirst of a *Carnal* Desire. So that were we admitted to that Heavenly Place where the Blessed dwell, yet unless we had acquired their Heavenly *Disposition* and *Temper*, we could never participate with them in their Pleasures. For so great would be the Antipathy of our sensual Affections to them, that we should doubtless fly away from them, and rather chuse to be for ever *Insensible*, than be condemned to an everlasting *Perception* of what is so *ungrateful* to our Natures. So that till we have in some measure moderated our *Concupiscible* Affections, and weaned them from their excessive Dotages upon *sensual* Good, it is impossible we should enjoy the Happiness of Heaven; For such perfect Opposites are a *Spiritual* Heaven and a *Carnal* Mind, that unless This be *spiritualized*, or That be *carnalized*, it is impossible they should ever meet and agree.

III. Another Virtue that belongs to a Man, considered meerly as a *Rational Animal*, is FORTITUDE; which in the largest sense consists in not permitting our *Irascible* Affections to exceed those Evils or Dangers which we seek to repel or avoid; in keeping our *Fear* and *Anger*, our *Malice*, *Envy*, and *Revenge*, in such due subjection as not to let them exceed those Bounds which Reason, and the Nature of Things, prescribe them. For I do not take *Fortitude* here in the narrow sense of the *Moralists*, as it is a Medium between *Irrational Fear* and *Fool-Hardiness*; but as it is the Rule

Rule by which all thoſe *Iraſcible* Paſſions in us, which ariſe from the ſenſe of any Evil or Danger, ought to be guided and directed; That by which we are to guard and defend our ſelves againſt all thoſe *troubleſom* and *diſquieting* Impreſſions which outward Evils and Dangers are apt to make upon our Minds: And in this Latitude *Fortitude* comprehends not only *Courage*, as it is oppoſed to *Fear*; but alſo *Gentleneſs*, as it is oppoſed to *Fierceneſs*; *Sufferance*, as it is oppoſed to *Impatience*; *Contentedneſs*, as it is oppoſed to *Envy*; and *Meekneſs*, as it is oppoſed to *Malice* and *Revenge*; All which are the Paſſions of *weak* and *Puſillanimous* Minds, that are not able to withſtand an Evil, nor endure the leaſt Touch of it without being *ſtartled* and *diſordered*; that are ſo ſoftned with Baſeneſs and Cowardiſe that they cannot reſiſt the moſt gentle Impreſſions of Injury. For as ſick Perſons are *offended* with the light of the Sun, and the freſhneſs of the Air, which are highly *pleaſant* and *delightful* to ſuch as are well and in health; Even ſo Perſons of weak and feeble minds are eaſily offended, their Spirits are ſo tender and effeminate, that they cannot endure the leaſt air of Evil ſhould blow upon them; and what would be only a *Diverſion* to a Couragious Soul, *troubles* and *incommodes* Them. And whatſoever Courage ſuch perſons may pretend to, it's meerly a Heat and Ferment of their Bloud and Spirits; a Courage, wherein *Game-Cocks* and *Maſtives* out-vy the greateſt *Heroes* of them all. But as to that which is truly Rational and Manly, which conſiſts in a firm Compoſedneſs of Mind in the midſt of Evil or Dangerous Accidents, they

are

are the moſt wretched Cowards in Nature. For the true *Fortitude* of the Mind conſiſts in being hardened againſt Evil upon *Rational Principles*; in being ſo fenced and guarded with *Reaſon* and *Conſideration*, as that no dolorous accident from without is able to invade it, or raiſe any violent Commotions in it; in a word, in having ſuch a conſtant Power over its *Iraſcible* Affections, as not to be over-prone either to be timorous in Danger, or envious in Want, or impatient in Suffering, or angry at Contempt, or malicious and revengeful under Injuries and Provocations. And till we have in ſome meaſure acquired this Virtue, we can never be happy either here or hereafter.

For whilſt we are in this world, we muſt expect to be encompaſſed with continual Crouds of Evil Accidents, ſome or other of which will be always preſſing upon and juſtling againſt us: So that if our minds are *ſore* and *uneaſie*, and over-apt to be *affected* with Evil, we ſhall be continually *pained* and *diſquieted*. For, whereas were our Minds but *calm* and *eaſie*, all the Evil Accidents that befal us would be but like a Showre of Hail upon the Tiles of a Muſick-houſe, which with all its *Clatter* and *Noiſe* diſturbs not the Harmony that is *within*; our being too apt to be moved into Paſſion by them, *uncovers* our mind to them, and lays it open to the Tempeſt. And commonly the greateſt Hurt which theſe outward Evils do us, is, their *diſturbing* our Minds into violent Paſſions; and this they will never ceaſe doing, till we have throughly *fortified* our Reaſon againſt them. For if our *Reaſon* commands not our Paſſions,

Paſſions, to be ſure *outward Accidents* will; and while they do ſo, we are Tenants at will to them for all our Peace and Happineſs; and according as they happen to be *Good* or *Bad*, ſo muſt we be ſure ſtill to be *Happy* or *Miſerable*. And in this Condition, like a Ship without a Pilot in the midſt of a Tempeſtuous Sea, we are the ſport of every wind and wave, and know not, till the Event hath determined it, how the next Billow will diſpoſe of us; whether it will daſh us againſt a *Rock*, or drive us into a quiet *Harbour*.

So miſerable is our Condition *here*, while we are utterly deſtitute of this Virtue of *Fortitude*; But much more miſerable will the want of it neceſſarily render us *hereafter*. For all thoſe Affections which fall under the Inſpection and Government of *Fortitude*, are, in their *Exceſſes*, naturally vexatious to the Mind, and do always diſturb and raiſe Tumults in it. For ſo *Wrath* and *Impatience* diſtracts and alienates it from it ſelf, and confounds its Thoughts, and ſhuffles them together into a heap of wild and diſorderly Fancies; ſo *Malice*, *Envy*, and *Revenge* do fill it with anxious biting Thoughts, that like young Vipers gnaw the Womb that bears them, and fret and gall the wretched Mind that forms, and gives them Entertainment. And though in this world we are not ſo ſenſible of the miſchief which theſe black and rancorous Paſſions do us; partly becauſe our ſenſe of them is *abated* with the Intermixture of our Bodily pleaſures; and partly becauſe while we operate, as we do, by theſe unwieldy Organs of Fleſh, our Reflections cannot be comparably ſo *quick*, nor our Paſſions ſo *violent*,

nor

nor our Perceptions ſo *brisk* and *exquiſite* as they will doubtleſs be, when we are ſtript into naked Spirits; yet if we go away into the other World with theſe Affections *unmortified* in us, they will not only be far more *violent* and *outragious* than now, and we ſhall not only have a far *quicker* Senſe of them than now; but this our ſharp ſenſe of them ſhall be *pure* and *ſimple*, without any intermixture of pleaſure to ſoften and allay it. And if ſo, Good Lord! what exquiſite *Devils* and *Tormentors* will they prove, when an extreme *Rage* and *Hate*, *Envy* and *Revenge* ſhall be all together like ſo many hungry Vultures, preying on our Hearts; and our Mind ſhall be continually *baited* and *worried* with all the furious Thoughts which theſe outragious Paſſions can ſuggeſt to us! When with the meagre Eyes of *Envy* we ſhall look up towards the Regions of Happineſs, and inceſſantly *pine* and *grieve* at the Felicities of thoſe that inhabit them; when through a ſenſe of our own *Follies*, and of the miſerable Effects of them, our *Rage* and *Impatience* ſhall be heightned, and boiled up into a *Diabolical Fury*; and when at the ſame time, an Inveterate *Malice* againſt all that we converſe with, and a fierce deſire of *Revenging* our ſelves upon thoſe who have contributed to our Ruine, ſhall, like a Wolf in our Breaſts, be continually gnawing and feeding upon our Souls, what an inſupportable *Hell* ſhall we be to our ſelves! Doubtleſs that *Outward Hell* to which bad Spirits are condemned is very terrible; but I cannot imagine, but that the worſt of their Hell is *within* themſelves, and that their own Deviliſh Paſſions are ſeverer *Furies* to them than all thoſe

Devils

Devils that are without them. For *Wrath* and *Envy*, *Malice* and *Revenge* are both the Nature and the Plague of Devils; and though, as Angels, they are the Creatures of God; yet, as Devils, they are the Creatures of theſe their Devilliſh *Affections*; they were theſe that transformed them from Bleſſed Angels into curſed Fiends, and could they but once ceaſe to be *envious* and *malicious*, they would ceaſe to be Devils, and turn Bleſſed Angels again. If then theſe rancorous Affections have ſuch a malignant Influence as to *blacken* Angels into Devils, and make them the moſt miſerable who were once the moſt *happy* Creatures, how can we ever expect to be happy ſo long as we indulge and harbour them?

Wherefore to remove this great Impediment of our Happineſs, Chriſtianity ſtrictly enjoyns us to practiſe this neceſſary Virtue of *Fortitude*, which conſiſts in the due Regulation of all theſe our *Iraſcible* Affections; in moderating our *Anger* and *Impatience*, ſuppreſſing our *Envy*, and extinguiſhing all our unreaſonable *Hatred* and Deſire of *Revenge*. For hitherto tend all thoſe Evangelical Precepts which require us to *put away all bitterneſs and wrath, all clamour, and evil ſpeaking and malice*, Eph. iv. 31. *to lay aſide all malice, and to be children in malice*, 1 Pet. ii. 1. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. *to be ſtrengthned with all might unto all patience and long-ſuffering*, Col. i. 11. And accordingly all the Virtues which are comprehended in this of *Fortitude* are reckoned among the Fruits of that Bleſſed Spirit by which we are to be guided and directed, *Gal.* v. 22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, and meekneſs*; all which

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are nothing but this great Vertue of Fortitude, ſeverally exerting it ſelf upon thoſe ſeveral *Iraſcible* Affections that are in us, and guiding and regulating them according to thoſe Laws and Directions which right Reaſon ſeverally preſcribes them; and ſetting ſuch Bounds and Limits to each of them as are neceſſary to the Peace and Happineſs of our Rational Natures; That ſo when Outward Dangers or Evils do excite them, they may not ſtart out into ſuch wild Exceſſes as to become *Plagues* and *Diſeaſes* to our Minds.

Now how much the Practice of this Vertue conduces to our Heavenly Happineſs is evident from hence, That all the Diſeaſes and Diſtemperatures which our Mind is capable of, are nothing elſe but the *Exceſſes* of its *Concupiſcible* and *Iraſcible* Affections; nothing but its being affected with Good and Evil *beyond* thoſe Limits and Meaſures which right Reaſon preſcribes. Did we but love outward Goods according to the value at which true Reaſon rates them, we ſhould neither be vexed with an *Impatient Deſire* of them while we *want*, nor diſappointed of our *Expectation* while we *enjoy* them. And when our Deſires towards theſe outward Goods are reduced to that Coolneſs and Moderation as neither to be *impatient* in the *Purſuit*, nor *diſſatisfied* in the *Enjoyment* of them, it is impoſſible they ſhould give any Diſturbance to our Minds. And ſo, on the other hand, did we but take care to regulate our Reſentments of Outward Evils and Dangers as right Reaſon adviſes, they would never be able to *hurt* or *diſcompoſe* our Minds. For right Reaſon adviſes that we ſhould not ſo reſent them as

to

to *increaſe* and *aggravate* them; that we ſhould not add the Diſquietude of an *Anxious Fear* to the Dangers that threaten us, nor the Torment of an *Outragious anger* to the Indignities that are offered us, nor the Smart of a *Peeviſh Impatience* to the ſufferings that befal us: in a word, that we ſhould not aggravate our Want through an *invidious Pining* at anothers Fulneſs, nor ſharpen the Injuries that are offered us, by a *malicious* and *revengeful* Reſentment of them. And he that follows theſe Advices of Reaſon, and conducts his *Iraſcible* Affections by them, has a Mind that is elevated above the Reach of Injury; that ſits above the Clouds in a calm and quiet Æther, and with a brave Indifferency hears the rowling Thunders grumble and burſt under its Feet. And whilſt Outward Evils fall upon *timorous* and *peeviſh* and *malicious* Spirits, like Sparks of fire upon a heap of Gunpowder, and do preſently blow them up, and put them all in Combuſtion; when they happen to a *diſ-paſſionate* Mind they fall like Stones on a Bed of Down, where they ſit eaſily and quietly, and are received with a calm and ſoft Compliance. When therefore by the continual Practice of *Moderation* and *Fortitude* we have tamed and civilized our *Concupiſcible* and *Iraſcible* Affections, and reduced them under the Government of Reaſon, our Minds will be free from all *Diſeaſe* and *Diſturbance*, and we ſhall be liable to no other Evil but that of Bodily Senſe and Paſſion. So that when we leave our *Bodies*, and go into the World of *Spirits*, we ſhall preſently feel our ſelves in perfect *Health* and *Eaſe*. For the *Health* of a Reaſonable Soul conſiſts in being

perfectly

perfectly Reasonable, in having all its Affections *perfectly* subdued to a well-informed Mind, and clothed in the Livery of its Reason. And while it is thus, it cannot be diseased in that *Spiritual* State wherein it will be wholly separated from all *bodily* Sense and Passion; because it has no Affection in it that can any way disturb or ruffle its calm and gentle Thoughts. And then feeling all within it self to be *well*, and as it *should* be; every String tuned into a perfect Harmony; every Motion and Affection corresponding with the most perfect Draughts and Models of its own Reason, it must needs highly *approve* of, and be perfectly *satisfied* with it self; and while it surveys its own Motions and Actions, it must necessarily have a most delicious Gust and Relish of them, they being all such as its best and purest Reason approves of, with a *full* and *ungainsaying* Judgment. And thus the Soul being cured of all *irregular* Affection, and removed from all *corporeal* Passion, will live in perfect *Health* and *Vigour*, and for ever enjoy within it self a Heaven of *Content* and *Peace*.

IV. Another Virtue which appertains to a man considered meerly as a *Rational Animal* is TEMPERANCE; which consists in not indulging our *Bodily Appetites* to the hurt and prejudice of our *Rational Nature*; Or, in refraining from all those *Excesses* of Bodily pleasure, of Eating, Drinking, and Venery, which do either *disorder* our *Reason*, or *indispose* us to enjoy the pure and spiritual pleasures of the Mind. For, besides that all Excesses of *Bodily* pleasures are naturally prejudicial to our *Reason*, as they indispose those

Bodily Organs by which it operates: (For so *Drunkenness* dilutes the Brain, which is the Mint of the Understanding, and drowns those Images it stamps upon it in a Floud of unwholsom Rheums and Moistures; and *Gluttony* clogs the Animal Spirits, which are, as it were, the Wings of the Mind, and indispose them for the Highest and Noblest Flights of Reason; so *Wantonness* chafes the Bloud into Feverish Heats, and by causing it to boil up too fast into the Brain, disorders the motions of the Spirits there, and so confounds the *Phantasms*, that the mind can have no clear or distinct Perception of them; by which means our Intellectual Faculties are very often *interrupted*, and forced to sit still for want of proper Tools to work with, and so, by often *loitering*, grow by degrees *listless* and *unactive*, and at the last, are utterly *indisposed* to any Rational Operations;) Besides this, I say, (which must needs be a mighty prejudice to our Rational Nature) by too much *familiarizing* our selves to *bodily* Pleasures, we shall break off all our *acquaintance* with *spiritual* ones; and grow, by degrees, such utter strangers to them, that we shall never be able to relish and enjoy them; and our *Soul* will contract such an *Uxorious Fondness* of the *Body* (*that* being the Shop of all the Pleasure it was ever acquainted with) that 'twill never be able to live happily without it. For though in its separate state it cannot be supposed that the Soul will retain the *Appetites* of the Body; yet, if while it is in the Body, it wholly abandons it self to *Corporeal* Pleasures, it may, and doubtless will, retain a vehement *hankering* after it, and *longing* to be reunited

united to it; which, I conceive, is the only ſenſuality that a ſeparated Soul is capable of. For when ſuch a Soul arrives into the Spiritual World, her having wholly accuſtomed her ſelf to *bodily* Pleaſure, and never experienced *any other*, will neceſſarily render her incapable of enjoying the Pleaſures of pure and bleſſed Spirits. So that being left utterly deſtitute of all her dear Delights and Satisfactions, which are ſuch as ſhe knows ſhe can never enjoy but in *conjunction* with the *Body*, all her Appetite and Longing muſt neceſſarily be an outragious Deſire of being *Embodied* again, that ſo ſhe may be capable of repeating her old *ſenſual* Pleaſures, and acting over the *brutiſh* Scene anew.

And this, as ſome think, is the Reaſon why ſuch *groſs* and *ſenſual* Souls have appeared ſo often, after their ſeparation, in the *Churchyards*, or *Charnel-Houſes* where their Bodies were laid; becauſe they cannot pleaſe themſelves without them: Ἡ δὲ (ψυχὴ) ἐπιθυμητικῶς τοῦ σώματος ἔχουσα, περὶ ἐκεῖνο πολὺν χρόνον ἐπλημμύνη, καὶ περὶ τὸν ὁρατὸν τόπον πολλὰ ἀντιτείνασα, καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα, βίᾳ καὶ μόλις ὑπὸ τοῦ προσταγμένου δαίμονος οἴχεται ἀγομένη. *The ſoul that is infected with a great Luſt to the Body, continues ſo for a great while after Death, and ſuffering great Reluctancies, hovers about this viſible place, and is hardly drawn from thence by force, by the Demon that hath the Guard and Care of it.* Where by the *viſible Place* he means, Περὶ τὰ μνήματά τε καὶ τὰς ταφὰς περὶ ἃ δὴ καὶ ὤφθη ἄτλα ψυχῶν σκιοειδῆ φαντάσματα. That is, *About* Plat. Phæd. pag. 398. Ibid. Pag. 386.

their Monuments and Sepulchres, where the shadowy Phantasms of such Souls have sometimes appeared. For being utterly unacquainted with the pleasures of *Spirits*, they have nothing in all the spiritual world to feed their hungry Desire, which makes them when they are permitted to wander, to hover about, and linger after their *Bodies*; the Impossibility of being re-united to them not being able to cure them of their impotent Desire of it, but still they would fain be alive again, and re-assume their old Instruments of pleasure;

------ Iterumque ad tarda reverti
Corpora: ------
------ Quæ lucis miseris tam dira Cupido?

And hence among other Reasons, it was that the Primitive Christians did so severely abstain from Bodily pleasures, that by this means they might gently *wean* the Soul from the Body, and teach it before-hand to live upon the Delights of separated Spirits; that so upon its separation it might drop into Eternity, like ripe Fruit from the Tree, with Ease and Willingness; and that by accustoming it before to *spiritual* pleasures and Delights, it might acquire such a savoury Sense and Relish of them, as to be able, when it came into the *spiritual* world, to live wholly upon them, and to be so entirely satisfied with them, as not to be endlessly vext with a tormenting Desire of returning to the Body again. For so *Clemens Alexandrinus*, Ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς θηρωμένοις τὴν βρῶσιν τὴν ἐπουράνιον. ἄρχειν ἀνάγκη τῆς ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν γαστρὸς, ἤτι τὸ μᾶλλον

Pædag. l. 2. c. 1. pag. 141.

μᾶλλον χ᾽ τῶν ταύτῃ προσφιλῶν· *We that are hunting after the Heavenly Food, muſt take heed that we keep our Earthly Belly in ſubjection, and to keep a ſtrict Government over thoſe things that are pleaſant to it.* For ſaith he a little before, Ὄυτε γὰρ ἔργον ἡμῖν ἡ τροφὴ, ὅτε σκοπὸς ἡδονή· ὑπὲρ δὲ τῆς ἐνταῦθα διαμονῆς, ἣν ὁ λόγ᾽ εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν παιδαγωγεῖ· *Neither,* ſaith he, *is Food our Work, nor Pleaſure our Aim, but we uſe them only as neceſſaries to our preſent Abode, in which our Reaſon is inſtituting, and training us up to a life incorruptible*; *i. e.* They did ſo uſe them, as that, as much as in them lay, they might wean their Souls from the pleaſures of them, that ſo they might have the better Appetite to that Spiritual Food upon which they were to live for ever. Ibid. Pag. 139.

And therefore thus to *temperate* and *reſtrain* our ſelves in the Uſe of Bodily pleaſures is one of the neceſſary Virtues of the *Chriſtian Life*. For hitherto tend all thoſe Precepts concerning *abſtaining from fleſhly luſts which war againſt our Souls*, 1 Pet. ii. 11. and *mortifying the deeds of the Body*, Rom. viii. 13. and *keeping under the Body*, 1 Cor. ix. 27. and *putting off the body of the ſins of the Fleſh*, Col. ii. 11. And we are ſtrictly enjoyned *to be temperate in all things, to watch and be ſober, and walk honeſtly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in exceſs of Wine, revellings and banquetings*; The ſenſe of all which is, That we ſhould not indulge our *bodily* Appetites to the vitiating and depraving of our *ſpiritual*; that we ſhould not plunge our ſelves ſo far in the Pleaſures of the *Fleſh*, as to

down our Senſe and Perception of *Divine* and *Heavenly* Enjoyments; but that we ſhould ſo far ſubdue and mortifie our *Senſuality*, as that it may not have the *Dominion* over us, nor be the *prevalent* Delight and Complacency of our Souls; but that the *commanding* Biaſs, and *ſwaying* Propenſion within us may be towards Divine and Heavenly Enjoyments; that ſo, when we leave this Body, we may not be ſo *wedded* to the Pleaſures of it, as not to be able to be Happy without them; but that we may carry with us into Eternity ſuch a quick Senſe and lively Reliſh of the Pleaſures above, as to be able to *live upon*, and be for ever *ſatisfied* with them.

So that at firſt View it is evident how much the practice of this Virtue conduces to our Future Happineſs. For by taking us off from all exceſs of bodily pleaſure, it diſpoſes us to enjoy the pleaſures of Heaven, and *connaturalizes* our Souls to them: So that when after a long Exerciſe of *Temperance*, we come to leave the *Body*, our Soul will be ſo looſened from it before hand, and rendred ſo indifferent to the *Delights* of it, that we ſhall be able to part both with *It* and *Them* without any great *Regret* or *Reluctancy*, and to live from them for ever without any diſquieting *Longings* or *Hankerings* after them. For, as when we are grown up by Age and Experience to a ſenſe of more *manly* pleaſures, we deſpiſe Nuts and Rattles, which, when we were *Children*, we accounted our Happineſs, and ſhould have reckoned our ſelves undone had we been deprived of them; So when by the Practice of a ſevere *Temperance*, we have acquired a thorough ſenſe of the pleaſures

ſures of *Virtue* and *Religion*, we ſhall look upon all our *bodily* pleaſures as the little Toys and Fooleries of our Infant State, with which we pleaſed our childiſh Fancies when we knew no better. And whereas had we been deprived of them *then*, we ſhould have cried and bemoaned our ſelves, as little Children do when they loſe their play-games, and reckon our ſelves undone and miſerable; upon the Experience we have had of the *Nobler* and more *Generous* pleaſures of Religion, we ſhall be able to deſpiſe theſe *little*, *poor* Entertainments of our Infancy; to take our leave of them without a Tear in our Eyes, and to live eternally without miſſing them. For, our minds being for the main reconciled to *Rational* and *Spiritual* pleaſures, we ſhall put off all Remains of *bodily* Luſt with our *Bodies*, and ſo flie away into the ſpiritual world with none but *Pure* and *Spiritual* Appetites about us; where meeting with an *infinite Fulneſs* of Spiritual Joys and Pleaſures, of which we had many a *foretaſte* in the Body, our *prediſpoſed* Mind will preſently cloſe with, and feed upon them, with ſuch an *unſpeakable* Content and Satisfaction, as will *raviſh* it for ever from the Thoughts of all other Pleaſures. So that now we ſhall not only be able to *ſubſiſt* without Fleſhly Delights, but to *deſpiſe* and *ſcorn* them; our Faculties being treated every moment with far *nobler* Fare, and *better* Joys.

V. Another of thoſe Virtues which belong to a man conſidered meerly as a *Rational Animal*, is HUMILITY; which conſiſts in a *modeſt* and *lowly* opinion of our ſelves, and of our own *Acquiſitions*, *Merits*, or *Endowments*; Or, in not

valuing our ſelves beyond what is *due* and *juſt*, upon the account of any Good we are poſſeſſed of, whether it be *Internal* or *External*. For *Pride*, or an over-weening *Self-Conceit* is the Bane of all our Virtue and Happineſs. It cauſes us to overlook our *Defects*, and thereby hinders us from making further *Improvement*; and it poſſeſſes us with an opinion that we *deſerve* more than we have, and thereby renders us *diſſatisfied* with our preſent Enjoyments. For by how much any man *over-values* himſelf, by ſo much he *under-values* what he enjoys; becauſe while he compares what he enjoys with the fond opinion that he hath of himſelf, he always finds it *ſhort* of his Deſert, and ſo can never be *ſatisfied* with it. Yea, ſuch is the croſs and capricious Humour of a proud Spirit, that the more it poſſeſſes, the bigger it ſwells with the *opinion* of its own Deſert; and the *more* it is opinionated of its own Deſert, the *leſs* it is ſatisfied with that which it poſſeſſes and enjoys. For when a man is exceeding apt to *flatter* and *cokes* himſelf, he will catch at any pretence to exalt his own Merit and Deſert, and be ready to meaſure it, not only by what he *is*, but by what he *has* too; and then reckoning his *outward* Poſſeſſions to be the Rewards or Products of his *Inward* Worth, the more he *has*, the more he will ſtill imagine he *deſerves to have*. So that his *Opinion* of his own *Deſert* will ſtill run on ſo faſt before his *Enjoyments*, that though they ſhould follow it never ſo cloſe, as the Hinder wheels of a Chariot do the Fore ones, yet it would be impoſſible for them to overtake it; And ſo long as he conceives his Enjoyments to be *behind* his Deſert, he will be always

always *Diſcontented*, and *diſſatisfied* with them; and while he continues of this Humour, the utmoſt Bliſs and Glory that Heaven affords would not be able to ſatisfie him. For if he were ſet equal in Glory with the *higheſt Saint*, he would be ſo puffed and exalted by it in his own Conceit, that he would fancy he merited the Glory of an *Angel*; and if from thence he were advanced to the Throne of an *Arch-Angel*, he would flatter himſelf into a conceit that he deſerved the Glory and Dignity of a *God:* And ſo long as he fancied his Advancement to be *below* his Merit, he would never be *contented* with it, how *high* ſoever it were, but be continually *vexing* and *repining* that he was raiſed no *higher*.

And this I verily believe was the Temper of the *Devil*, and that which finally ruined and undid him. For when he was an *Angel* of *Light*, he was doubtleſs placed by the *Father of Spirits*, in ſuch an Order or Degree of Dignity as became the perfection of his Nature. But he, reflecting on his own Indowments, and the Glorious Condition wherein he was placed, began firſt to ſwell with an *arrogant* and *overweening* conceit of himſelf, and to ſet *too high* a value upon his own Angelical Graces and Perfections; and, as the natural Effect of this, to imagine that he was not high enough advanced in the Scale of the *Heavenly Hierarchy*, and that his *Station* in the Commonwealth of Angels was *beneath* the Grandeur and Dignity of his Nature. This made him look up with *envious* Eyes upon the Glorious Orders *above* him, into whoſe ſublime Rank he being forbid to aſpire by God, the Prince of Spirits, he proceeded

proceeded by Degrees to malign and hate both *Him* and *Them*. And this he firſt expreſſed by entring into a *Conſpiracy* againſt him with ſome of his Fellow-Angels, whom he found moſt apt to be wrought upon by him; together with whom he made an open *Revolt*, forſook the Bleſſed Abodes, as not enduring to abide any longer amongſt thoſe Bleſſed Orders whom he ſo inveterately *hated* and *envied*; and ſo with his revolted *Legions* deſcends into this Aery Region, where ever ſince he hath perſiſted in open Hoſtility againſt God and Heaven. And accordingly it is ſaid of Him and his Accomplices, that they *kept not their firſt Station*, that is, they would needs have a *higher* Station in Heaven than that wherein God had placed them; which becauſe they could not obtain, *they left their own Habitation*, *i.e.* forſook Heaven, their Native Country and Abode, and came down into theſe lower parts of the World, upon Deſign to ſtrengthen their Party againſt Heaven by ſeducing Mankind into the ſame Revolt with themſelves, *Jude* 6.

Thus 'twas the Devils *Pride* you ſee, that made him *Envious*, his *Envy* that made him *Spiteful* and *Malicious*, all which together made him a *Devil*. And thus it would be with *us*, if we could be admitted into Heaven whilſt we are under the Power and Prevalence of *Pride* and *Self-Conceit*. For while we think better of our ſelves, than God does, we ſhall never be *contented* with his Retributions, who will be ſure to deal with every man according to his works; and that exceſſive value we ſhall have of our ſelves, will cauſe us to *undervalue* the Degree and Rank of Glory

Glory and Happineſs wherein we ſhall be placed by the juſt Rewarder of Souls, as a Station much beneath our imaginary Excellency and Perfection. And hence we ſhall proceed to *think hardly* of God, and to repine againſt him as a partial and unequal Diſtributer of his Favours, and to *envy* and *Malign* thoſe that were placed higher in Glory than our ſelves; and ſo at laſt, out of an implacable *Vexation* and *Diſcontent*, to leave our Habitations, as the Devils did, and fly away to their Revolted party. So impoſſible is it for a Soul that is under a prevailing Habit of *Pride* and *Self-Conceit* to be happy either here or hereafter.

And therefore to remove this Obſtacle, Chriſtianity impoſes the Practice of *Humility*, as a neceſſary means of our Happineſs; and requires us *to put on humbleneſs of mind*, Col. iii. 12. *to be clothed with humility*, 1 Pet. v. 5. *to walk with all lowlineſs and meekneſs*, Eph. iv. 1, 2. and *in lowlineſs of mind to eſteem others better than our ſelves*, Phil. ii. 3. In a word, to follow the Example of our Bleſſed Lord, who was *meek and lowly*, Matt. xi. 29. and *in honour to prefer one another*, Rom. xii. 10. The ſenſe of all which is, that we ſhould labour, as much as in us lies, to think very *meanly* and *modeſtly* of our ſelves, and not to be diſcontented if *others* think *meanly* of us too; *i. e.* that we ſhould neither be *proud* nor *vain-glorious*, neither too much exalted in our *own* opinions, nor endeavour to inſinuate into *others* a higher opinion of us than we do really deſerve: In ſhort, that we ſhould ſo effectually repreſent to our ſelves the little Reaſon we have to be proud of any Perſonal Accompliſhment, whether it be of Body, or Mind, to ſtrut,

like

like *Æsop*'s Crow, in these borrowed Feathers, which we could neither *give* to our selves, nor *merit* of God, but are wholly owing for to the Divine Bounty; so to inculcate upon our Minds the Folly and Ridiculousness of being proud of any *Outward Goods* we possess, such as fine Cloaths, great Estates, or Popular Reputation, all which are so far from either *making* or *speaking* us *wiser* or *better* men, that they are too often the Fruits and Testimonies of our *Folly* and *Knavery*; And, in fine, that we should so impartially reflect upon the many Follies and Indiscretions, Errors and Ignorances, Irregularities of Temper, Defects of Manners, and Deviations from Right Reason, that we are guilty of, as to shame our selves out of all those *proud* and *arrogant* Conceits that do so *swell* and *impostumate* our Minds.

And when by these, and such like *humbling* Reflections we have laid our selves low in our own Eyes, and so far abased our *Pride* and *Self-Conceit* as to be effectually convinced of the Folly of it, and throughly perswaded to abhor and hate it, to watch and strive against it, and to be habituated for the main to *mean* and *lowly* thoughts of our selves; though we should not here arrive to an absolute Perfection in *Humility* (having none here to converse, or compare our selves with but such as our selves, such as are many of them our *Inferiours*, many our *Equals*, and many but few Degrees our *Superiours*) yet, as soon as we go off from this *lower* Form, in which we may seem so considerable, into the Class and Society of those Glorious Inhabitants *above* (in whose bright Presence

Preſence we ſhall appear but like ſo many *Glow-Worms* in the midſt of a Firmament of *Stars*) all the *little Remains* of Pride and Self-Conceit in us, will immediately vaniſh from our Minds. For if at the ſight of an Angel the *Beloved Apoſtle* could not forbear proſtrating himſelf; how *proſtrate* and *lowly* muſt we be, when we ſee not only the whole Choir of Angels together, but God himſelf too, the Prince and Father of Spirits! For even here we find that the *nearer* we approach God, the more we *ſhrink* and *leſſen* in our own Eyes; and if in the preſence of *Angels* we are but *Dwarfs*, in the preſence of *God* we ſhall be *Nothings*. But Oh! when we ſhall not only *diſcern* how infinitely he out-ſhines us in Glory, but ſhall alſo continually *feel* by the moſt ſenſible Communications of his Goodneſs how we hang upon him, and derive every Breath and Joy and Glory from him; how our Being and Well-Being are the meer Alms and Penſions of his Bounty; how every Grace and Beauty in us is but the Reflection, and that a faint one too, of his out-ſtretched Rays; when, I ſay, we ſhall feel all this, as we ſhall do in Heaven every moment, by a quick and ſenſible Experience, how muſt it needs wean us from all *ſelf-arrogating* Thoughts, and perfectly *abaſe* and *humble* us in our own Eyes! And when this is done, our minds will be perfectly *tempered* and *prepared* for the Enjoyment of a perfect Happineſs; For now, ſuch a *modeſt* opinion we ſhall have of our ſelves, that whatſoever Degree of Glory we are placed in, we ſhall look upon it as far beyond our Deſert, and upon that account, be unſpeakably *ſatisfied* and *contented* with it, and freely

acknowledge

acknowledge it to be a thouſand Degrees beyond what we could deſire or hope for. And ſo far ſhall we be from *grudging* at, or *envying* thoſe above us, that out of an *humble* ſenſe of our own Unworthineſs we ſhall readily prefer them before our ſelves, and freely acknowledge that we are only ſo many Degrees *inferiour* to *them* in Glory, as they are *ſuperiour* to *us* in Divine Graces and Perfections. Upon which we ſhall not only *acquieſce*, but heartily *rejoyce* in their Advancement and be abundantly *pleaſed* that their *Reward* is as much greater than ours, as we do acknowledge their *Virtue* to be. In a word, ſo far ſhall we be from *repining* and *murmuring* at God for not rewarding *us* as liberally as *others*, that we ſhall be thorowly ſenſible that he hath been bountiful to us infinitely beyond our *Deſert* or *Expectation*; that 'twas not out of a fond *Partiality*, or blind *Reſpect of Perſons* that he raiſed others to higher Degrees of Glory than our ſelves, but out of a Principle of ſtrict *Juſtice* that exactly balances and adjuſts its Rewards, according to the Degrees of our Deſert and Improvement. The ſenſe of which will not only compoſe our minds into a perfect *Satisfaction*, but alſo continually excite us to thoſe Beatifical Acts of *Love* and *Praiſe*, *Thankſgiving* and *Adoration*. Thus *Humility*, you ſee, tunes and compoſes us for Heaven, and only caſts us down, like Balls, that we may rebound the higher in Glory and Happineſs.

Thus you ſee how all thoſe Virtues, which appertain to a man conſidered as a *Reaſonable Animal*, conduce to the Great Chriſtian End, *viz.* The Happineſs of Heaven. 'Tis true indeed the immediate

immediate product of this ſort of Virtues is only at leaſt *chiefly*, *privative* Happineſs, or, the Happineſs of *Reſt* and *Indolence*, which conſiſts in not *being miſerable*, or, in a perfect *ceſſation* from all ſuch Acts and Motions as are *hurtful* and *injurious* to a Rational ſpirit. For, as I have ſhewed you in the Beginning of this Section, the proper office of *Humane* Virtue conſiſts in ſo regulating all our Powers of Action, as that we do nothing that is hurtful or injurious to our Rational Nature; and this, you plainly ſee, theſe Five aforenamed Virtues do moſt effectually perform. But beſides this *Privative*, there is, as I ſhewed you, a *Poſitive* part of Happineſs, which conſiſts not in *Reſt*, but in *Motion*; in the Vigorous Exerciſe of our Rational Faculties upon ſuch Objects as are moſt ſuitable to them; And to the obtaining of this part of our Happineſs, there are other kinds of Virtues neceſſary to be practiſed by us, of which I ſhall diſcourſe in the two following Sections. But though the *immediate* Effect of theſe *Humane* Virtues we have been diſcourſing of, be only the Happineſs of *Reſt*, yet do they tend a great deal farther, even to the Happineſs of *Motion* and *Exerciſe*. For it is impoſſible ſo to ſuppreſs that Active Principle within us, as to make it totally ſurceaſe from Motion; and therefore as every intermiſſion of its *ſober* and *regular* Actings does but make way for *wild* and *extravagant* ones; ſo every abatement of its *hurtful* and *injurious* motions, makes way for *beatifical* ones; And ſo the *Humane* Virtues by giving us reſt from thoſe Motions that are *afflictive* to our Natures, incline and diſpoſe us to ſuch Motions and Exerciſes as are moſt *pleaſant* and *grateful* to it.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Concerning thoſe Divine Virtues *which belong to a Man conſidered as a Reaſonable Creature, related to* God, *ſhewing that theſe alſo are comprehended in the heavenly part of the* Chriſtian Life; *and that the practice of them effectually conduces to our future happineſs.*

I proceed now to the ſecond kind of Virtues, *viz. Divine*, to which I told you we are obliged in the capacity of reaſonable Creatures related to *God*; who being not only endowed with all poſſible perfections, with infinite *Truth* and *Juſtice*, *Wiſdom* and *Juſtice*, and *Power* with all that can render any being moſt highly *reverenced*, *admired*, *loved* and *adored*; who being not only the Author of our Being, and Well-being, as he is Creator and Preſerver of all things, but alſo our Sovereign Lord and King, as he is God Almighty, the ſupreme and over-ruling Power of heaven and earth, hath upon all theſe accounts a juſt and unalienable claim to ſundry duties and homages from his Creatures; all which I ſhall reduce to theſe ſix particulars:

1. That we ſhould frequently *think of*, and *contemplate* the beauty and perfection of his nature.

2. That upon the account of theſe perfections we ſhould humbly *worſhip* and *adore* him.

3. That we ſhould ardently *love*, and take *complacency* in him.

4. That

4. That we ſhould attentively and unwearied-ly *imitate* him in all his imitable perfections and actions.

5. That we ſhould intirely *reſign up* our ſelves to his conduct and diſpoſal.

6. That we ſhould chearfully *rely*, and *depend* upon him. All which, as I ſhall ſhew, are included in the heavenly part of the *Chriſtian Life*, and do moſt effectually contribute to our future happineſs.

I. As we are rational Creatures related to *God*, we are obliged to be often *contemplating* and *thinking upon* him. For the natural uſe of our underſtanding is to contemplate Truth, and therefore the more of *Truth* and *Reality* there is in any knowable object, and the farther it is removed from *Falſhood* and *Non-entity*, the more the Underſtanding is concerned to *contemplate* and *think upon* it. God therefore being the moſt *true* and *real* object, as he ſtands removed by the *neceſſity* of his exiſtence from all *poſſibility* of not-being; muſt needs be the moſt perfect Theme of our Underſtanding, the beſt and greateſt Subject, on which it can employ its Meditations. And beſides that he is the moſt *true* and *real* of all beings, he is alſo the ſource and ſpring of all *Truth* and *Reality*, his Power conducted by his Wiſdom, and Goodneſs being the cauſe, not only of all that *is*, but of all that either *ſhall* be, or *can* be. And is it fit that our Underſtanding, which was made to *contemplate*, ſhould wholly over-look the fountain of it? But beſides this too, that he is the greateſt *Truth* himſelf, and the cauſe of every thing elſe that is *true* and *real*, he is the Soveraign of Beings,

and the moſt *amiable* and *perfect*, as he includes in his infinite Eſſence all poſſible perfections both in kind and degree. And what a monſtrous Irreverence is it for minds that were framed to the contemplation of Truth, to paſs by ſuch a *great* and *glorious* one without any regard or obſervance; as if he ſtood for a Cypher in the world, and were not worthy to be thought upon? Nay, and beſides all this, (which one would think were enough to oblige our Underſtandings to the ſtricteſt attendance to him) he is a Truth in which above all others we are moſt *nearly concerned*, as he is not only the *Father* and *Prop* of our Beings, and the *Conſolation* of our lives, but the ſole *Arbiter* of our Fate too, upon whom our everlaſting well or ill being depends. And what can we be more concerned to *think* and *meditate* upon than this great Being, from whom we ſprang, in whom we live and breath, and of whom we are to expect all that evil or good that we can fear or hope for. All which conſidered, there is no doubt to be made but that our Underſtanding was chiefly made for God, to look up to him, and contemplate his Being and Perfections. And though in this *imperfect* State it is too often averted from him, by this vaſt variety of ſenſual things that ſurround it, and intercept its Proſpect, yet as our Soul recovers out of this *ſenſual* condition into a life of *Reaſon*, we find by experience that its Underſtanding preſently looks upwards, by a natural Inſtinct, and directs it ſelf to God, as to its proper *Pole* and *Center*. And as it grows more and more *indifferent* to the objects of Senſe, ſo it becomes more and more *vigorous* in its tendency towards

towards God and divine things. And 'tis no wonder it doth so, since it is God only who is an *infinite* Truth, that is able to satisfie its *infinite* Thirst after Truth. And hence it is, that till we have throughly fixed our Minds and Wills upon God, we do naturally affect such an *Infinity* of Objects, that our Desires are always reaching at *new* Pleasures, and carried forth after *new* Possessions; that our Fancy is always entertaining our mind with *new* Ideas, and our Understanding continually calling for *new* Scenes of Contemplation. By which, as one hath well observed, the soul declares that it is not to be perfectly pleased with *finite* Truth or Good: Which possibly may be the reason of that delight we take in Fables, and Pictures of Anticks and Monsters, because they *exceed* the limits of Truth, and so do *enlarge*, as it were, the prospect of the Soul, which by its unconfined motions, shews that it is of a Divine Extract, and that it can never be perfectly satisfied but in union with God, who is an infinite Ocean of Truth and Goodness. For as for all other Beings, they are so very *shallow*, that we quickly see (or at least shall do, when we see after the manner of Spirits) to the very bottom of their Truth and Reality; and when we have done that, they have no more in them to feed and entertain our understandings. So that when we have exhausted the Truth of *finite* Beings, we must either cease to understand any more, which would be to deprive our noblest Faculty of any farther Pleasure, or we must at last fix our mind upon God, in whom it will find such *infinite* Truth, as will be sufficient to exercise it through-

out all its *infinite* Duration. But unleſs we do *now* acquaint our minds with God by frequent *thinking* and *meditating* upon him, we ſhall by degrees grow ſuch *Strangers* to him, that, by that time we go into the other world, we ſhall be ſo far from being *pleaſed* with contemplating him, that we ſhall look upon him as an *uncouth* Object, and out of diſtaſte *avert* and turn our eyes from him. For the mind of man muſt be *familiarized* to its objects, before it will be able to contemplate them with *pleaſure*, and though the objects themſelves be never ſo *amiable*, yet while the mind is *unuſed* to them, its thoughts will *ſtart* and *flie off* from them, and without a great deal of violence, will never be reduced to a *fixt* and *ſerious* attention to them. So that if we go into Eternity with minds *unaccuſtomed* to the thoughts of God, we ſhall be continually flying away from him, as Bats and Owls do from the light of the Sun, and never be able to compoſe our *awkward* thoughts into a fixed contemplation of his glory. And when we have thus baniſhed our ſelves from the only object that can for ever *bleſs* and *ſatisfie* our underſtanding, that can keep it in everlaſting *exerciſe* and *motion*, and feed its greedy thoughts eternally with *freſh* and *glorious* diſcoveries, we have utterly loſt one of the ſweeteſt Pleaſures that Humane Nature is capable of; and ſo muſt neceſſarily *pine* and *languiſh*, under an eternal diſcontentedneſs. To prevent which, the Goſpel enjoyns us to train up our minds to divine *Contemplation*, and to be frequently *thinking* and *meditating* upon God; *to mind thoſe things that are above*, for ſo the Greek word is to be rendred, *Col.* iii. 1. *To ſanctifie the Lord*

Lord God in our Hearts, 1 Pet. iii. 15. that is, by entertaining great and worthy Thoughts of him. And therefore the Goſpel is ſet before us as a *Glaſs*, that therein we may *contemplate and behold the glory of God*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. namely, that divine glory which is therein diſcovered and revealed to us; that we may ſet him always before our minds, and *gather up* our thoughts about him, and force them to *dwell* and *ſtay* upon him, that ſo they may taſte and reliſh his heavenly beauties, and pleaſe and ſatisfie themſelves with the view and contemplation of them. For though to meditate cloſely upon God may at firſt be *irkſom* and tedious to our unexperienced minds, yet when by the conſtant practice of it, we have worn off that *Strangeneſs* towards God, which renders the thoughts of him ſo *troubleſome* to us, and by frequent converſes are grown better acquainted with him, we ſhall grow by degrees ſo *pleaſed* and *ſatisfied* with the thoughts of him, that we ſhall not know how to live *without* them; and our minds at laſt will be toucht with ſuch a lively ſenſe of his attractive beauties, that we ſhall never be well but while we are with him; ſo that he will become the conſtant Companion of our thoughts, and the daily Theme of our *Meditations*; and nothing in the world will be ſo *grateful* and *acceptable* to us, as to retire now and then from the world, and converſe with God in holy *Contemplations*. And though by reaſon of our preſent *Circumſtances* and *Neceſſities* there is no remedy but our thoughts muſt be often diverted from him, and forced to attend to our ſecular occaſions; yet after they have been uſed a while to God, we

ſhall find they will never be ſo well pleaſed, nor ſo much at eaſe as when they are retired from every thing but God, and compoſed and ſetled into divine Meditations. So that when we go away into the other world, where we ſhall be removed from thoſe troubleſome *Circumſtances* and *Neceſſities*, which did here ſo often divert our thoughts from God, our minds which have been ſo *long* accuſtomed and habituated to him, will immediately faſten upon him, and entirely devote themſelves to the contemplation of his nature and glory. For our minds being already ſtrongly *inclined* and *byaſſed* towards God by thoſe grateful foretaſtes we have had of him in the Warmths of our Meditation, when we come into the ſtill and quiet Regions of the bleſſed, where we ſhall immediately have a more cloſe and intimate view of him than ever, all our thoughts will naturally run towards him, and be ſo captivated with the firſt ſight of his glory, that we ſhall never be able to look off again, as long as Eternity endures, but *one* view will invite us to *another*, and what we ſee will ſo tranſport and raviſh us, that we ſhall ſtill deſire to ſee further and further. And becauſe our finite mind will never be able fully to comprehend all that is *knowable* in his infinite Being, we ſhall be ſo delighted in every further Knowledge of him, that we ſhall ſtill deſire to know further, and that *Deſire* as faſt as it ſprings, ſhall ſtill be ſatisfied with a further *Knowledge*, and ſo to eternal ages, each new ſatisfaction ſhall immediately ſpring a new deſire, and each new deſire immediately terminate in a new ſatisfaction. And now, O happy mind! what tongue can expreſs thy joys

joys and raptures! that being thus in conjunction with God, art always filled with glorious Ideas, and compaſſed round with the wonders of his perfection; ſo that at every glance thou ſeeſt ſome new *Charm*, and with every thought makeſt ſome vaſt *Diſcovery*. O the tranſporting pleaſure of that bleſſed Viſion! which now I can hardly think of without an Ecſtaſie; when my poor longing Mind, which here gropes about for truth in a dark dungeon of Error and Ignorance, ſhall be let forth into the heavenly light, to ſee as it is ſeen, and know as it's known, how will it fix its greedy eyes upon God, of whoſe acquaintance it is now ſo deſirous! With what infinite delight will its winged and active thoughts hover in the light of his Countenance, which through every moment of Eternity will be ſtill revealing new Beauties to us, ſuch as will not only for ever *employ*, but for ever *inflame* our Meditations.

II. As we are Rational Creatures related to *God*, we are obliged humbly to *Worſhip* and *Adore* him, that is, that out of a moſt awful eſteem and profound reverence of his ſuper-excellent Majeſty, and boundleſs perfections, we ſhould bow down our Souls before him, and addreſs our ſelves to him by *Invocation* and *Prayer*, by *Praiſe* and *Thankſgiving*, as to the All-ſufficient, Independent, and ſole diſpoſer of every good and perfect gift; and that in theſe our Addreſſes we ſhould outwardly expreſs this our reverential Eſteem of him, by ſuch humble geſtures of Body, as are moſt apt to teſtifie it to others. For all this is but a juſt and due acknowledgment of what he is in *himſelf*, and to *us*, and all his *Creation*. The profoundeſt

Reverence and Veneration we can pay him, is but a juſt Acknowledgement of his Infinite *Majeſty* and *Power*; the moſt fervent Invocations and Prayers we can offer him, are but a due owning of him to be what he is, the ſupreme *Diſpoſer* and *Author* of all things; the moſt ample and glorious Praiſes we can give him are incomparably ſhort of what is owing to his infinite *Excellencies* and *Perfections*; the moſt thankful Acknowledgments we can make him, are but poor compoſitions for thoſe vaſt ſumms which we owe to his *Bounty* and *Liberality*. So that all our Worſhip is a moſt juſt Due ariſing from what he is in *himſelf*, and from what he doth to *Us*, and to all his *Creatures*. And till we are made throughly ſenſible of both, we are utterly incapable of eternal Happineſs; which conſiſting, as I ſhewed you before, in the vigorous exerciſe of our Rational Faculties upon God, doth neceſſarily require that we ſhould be duly affected with his Perfections and Actions. For unleſs we are ſo, we ſhall never be able to engage our Faculties vigorouſly to employ and exerciſe themſelves about him; unleſs our minds be over-awed with an habitual ſenſe of his infinite Majeſty and Power, we ſhall be apt to neglect him as an object too mean for our great Faculties to converſe with; unleſs our minds be ſtrongly diſpoſed to *eſteem* and *admire* his Glory and Excellencies, we ſhall never be able to excite our Underſtanding and Will to act upon him with any life and vigour: In a word, unleſs we are poſſeſſed with a conſtant ſenſe that he is the *Spring* of all thoſe goods which we enjoy or hope for, we ſhall be apt to look upon him as one with whom we are very little concerned, and

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ſo to neglect and diſregard him. So that unleſs we do now acquire an habitual Devotion of mind towards God, when we go from hence into the other world, we ſhall find our Faculties ſo *averſe* and *liſtleſs* to all that heavenly Motion and Exerciſe wherein the Happineſs above conſiſts, that we ſhall be utterly incapable to taſte and enjoy it. For in eternity our Souls will run according to the prevailing byaſs which they carry thither with them; but 'tis impoſſible they ſhould run towards God with *life* and *freedom*, unleſs they are conſtantly drawn and inclined to him by a devout veneration of his Majeſty, and admiration of his *Glory* and *Perfection*. And hence it is that the Goſpel doth ſo ſtrictly oblige us to *adore and worſhip God*, Rev. xxii. 9. *to worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth*, Joh. iv. 24. *to pray without ceaſing*, 1 Theſſ. v. 17. and *pray always with all prayer and ſupplication*, that is, earneſtly to ſupplicate God upon every fit opportunity and time of need, *Epheſ.* vi. 18. in a word, *to offer to God the ſacrifice of praiſe that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name*, Heb. xiii. 15. and *to thank God without ceaſing*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. The meaning of all which is, that out of a deep and quick ſenſe of the infinite Majeſty and Power, All-ſufficience and Beneficence of God, we ſhould be frequently bowing our ſelves before him, and offering up our Prayers and Praiſes, and Thankſgivings to him. And in the conſtant practice of theſe, we ſhall be growing up by degrees to that bliſsful ſtate of Heaven. For all theſe acts of divine Worſhip being immediate addreſſes of our minds to God, do ſo unite us to him, that in every hearty

hearty Prayer, Praiſe, or Thankſgiving, we do in a manner touch and feel him. For ſo while we humbly adore his Majeſty, we are ſenſibly ſtruck with the rays of it; while we earneſtly *invocate* his Goodneſs and Mercy, we are touched with a ſtrong attractive virtue from him, whereby we plainly feel our ſelves drawn up to him, and wrapt into a real enjoyment of him: In a word, while we are offering our hearty Praiſes and Thankſgivings to him, we are under a captivating ſenſe of his infinite Glory and Beneficence, and with a ſenſible touch of this his heavenly fire, our hearts are kindled and inflamed. Inſomuch that while we are upon our knees in a warmth and fervour of Devotion, our minds have many times as *quick* a perception, as *ſtrong* and *lively* a reliſh of God, as ever our bodily palate had of the moſt guſtful meats or liquors. So that by frequently repeating theſe our devotions, we frequently repeat theſe our ſenſations of God; which being often renewed will grow more *vigorous* and *conſtant*, and ſo at laſt improve into an *active*, *permanent*, and *habitual* ſenſe of him. And having thus acquired by our frequent and devout Worſhip, a *lively conſtant* feeling and perception of the Majeſty and Glory, of the Bounty and Benignity of God, when ever we go into eternity, this, like a vital ſpring will give a *perpetual motion* to our Faculties, and vigorouſly exert and employ them upon God for ever. The quick and lively ſenſe we ſhall have of his infinite Majeſty and Power, will for ever aw our Underſtandings and Wills into a ſtrict attention and ſubmiſſion to him; and have ſuch a commanding power over

over us as will even conſtrain us to regard him with the profoundeſt Reverence and Veneration. For there we ſhall have far greater and clearer apprehenſions of his Majeſty than ever we had in this imperfect ſtate; which will improve our pre-acquired ſenſe of it to ſuch a degree of Reſpect and Veneration, as will for ever over-rule our Faculties, and keep our Underſtandings, Wills and Affections in cloſe and ſtrict attendance to him. And as our ſenſe of his Majeſty will ſweetly *command*, ſo our ſenſe of his infinite Beauty and Beneficence will invincibly *allure* us to exert and exerciſe our faculties upon him. For he that hath an affectionate ſenſe of the Beauty and Goodneſs and Bounty of God, hath a heart ready tuned for the Muſick of Heaven, ready ſet and compoſed for everlaſting Praiſes and Hallelujahs. So that when he goes away from hence into the other world, and is there admitted to a more intimate view of the *perfections*, and a more abundant participation of the *bleſſings* of God than ever, his prediſpoſed mind will immediately be ſeized with ſuch a *ſtrong pathetick* ſenſe of both, as that he will not be able to withhold expreſſing and venting it in the moſt rapturous ſtrains of Admiration, and Praiſe, and Thankſgiving. And this will be his buſineſs and employment for ever, to admire and extol the Perfections of God, of which he will every moment make new and glorious Diſcoveries; and to celebrate with grateful acknowledgments the infinite riches of his Bounty, of which he will every moment have freſh and ſweet experiences. So that whilſt by continual acts of Praiſe,

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and Thanksgiving we endeavour to affect our minds with a due sense of the Goodness and Bounty of God, we are practising before-hand the Musick of Heaven, and taking out the Songs of *Zion*; that so when we go from hence, we may be qualified and prepared to bear a part in the Cœlestial Choir. So that true devotion (you see) which consists in a quick and lively sense of the infinite Majesty, Beauty, and Benignity of God, doth most effectually dispose the mind to all those divine and heavenly exercises wherein the state of Heaven consists.

III. As we are rational Creatures related to *God*, we are obliged to an unfeigned *love of*, and *complacency in* him. And that both upon the account of what he is in *himself*, as he is the most *lovely* and *amiable* of Beings, in whom there is an harmonious concurrence of all imaginable Beauties and Perfections, of Wisdom and Goodness, of Justice and Mercy, and every other amiable thing that can claim or attract a reasonable Affection, all which in infinite degrees are contempered together in his nature: and also upon the account of his infinite Kindness and Beneficence to us. For besides that he hath compassed us round, like so many *fortunate Islands*, with a vast Ocean of external Blessings, in which there is all that is either *necessary*, *convenient*, or *pleasant* for our bodily use and enjoyment; besides that he hath inspired us with immortal Minds, and stamped them with those fair impresses of his own Divinity, the knowledge of Truth, and the love of Goodness, which are both of them very forward capacities of the highest Perfection, and most exalted

exalted Happineſs: In a word, beſides that to ſupply and gratifie theſe our noble Capacities he hath prepared for us an immortal Heaven, and furniſht it with all the Pleaſures and Delights that a Heaven-born Mind can deſire or enjoy: beſides all this, I ſay, he hath ſent his own Son from Heaven to reveal to us the Way thither, and to encourage us to return into it, by dying for our ſins, and thereby obtaining for us a publick Grant and Charter of Mercy and Pardon, upon Condition of our return; yea, and as if all this were too little, he hath ſent his *Spirit* to us in the room of his Son to abide amongſt us, and as his *Vicegerent* to drive on this vaſt deſign of his love to us, to excite and perſwade us to return into that ſure way to Heaven, which he hath deſcribed to us, and to aſſiſt us all along in our travel thither. So wondrous careful hath he been not to be defeated of this his kind intention to make us everlaſtingly happy. And now what Heart can be ſo *hard* and *impenetrable* as to reſiſt ſuch powerful *Charms* and *Endearments!* Methinks if we had but the common Senſe and Ingenuity of men in us, it would be impoſſible for us to reflect upon ſuch miracles of Beauty and Love, without being intimately *touched* and *affected* with them. But till we are ſo, it will be impoſſible for us to enjoy Heaven; for how can we freely exert our Faculties upon an Object that we do not *love*; and if we cannot, how can we without *loving* God enjoy Heaven; which conſiſts in the free and chearful out-goings of all our Faculties upon him? For if when we go into Eternity we *love* him not, either he will be *indifferent*, or *hateful* to us; if the

the *former*, we ſhall altogether neglect and take no notice of him; if the *latter*, we ſhall either flie away from him, and baniſh our ſelves from his preſence, or be forced to abide and endure it with extreme regret and torment. For whilſt our minds are *averſe* and *repugnant* to him, whatſoever we ſee in him will but the more enrage and canker our malice againſt him; and even the ſight of thoſe his glorious Perfections, which ſo enraviſh the hearts of the bleſſed Inhabitants of Heaven, will only provoke and boil up our Diſlike of him to a higher degree of Hatred and Averſation. For ſo we find by experience in this life that while our minds are *unreconciled* to God, it is a *Penance* to us to come near him, to admit any Thoughts of, or Converſation with him. And this is the reaſon why we take ſo much pains as we do to miſrepreſent him to our ſelves, to draw ſuch Pictures and Ideas of him upon our Minds, as beſt correſpond with our own Tempers; that ſo having thus transformed our Notion of him into the Image of our ſelves, *Narciſſus*-like we may fall in love with him, or at leaſt more eaſily endure his bleſſed Preſence and Converſation. When therefore we ſhall go into the other world, where all theſe Diſguiſes of the divine Idea ſhall be taken off, and *we ſhall ſee him as he is*, circled about with his own Rays of unſtained and immaculate Glory, we ſhall never be able to *abide* him; but being all *affrighted* and *confounded* at the Glory of his Preſence, we ſhall be forced to *run away*, and, if poſſible, to *hide* our ſelves from him in everlaſting *Darkneſs* and *Deſpair*. For our Wills being poyſoned and infected with an habitual

Enmity

Enmity againſt him, it muſt needs be torment to us to *ſee* him, becauſe we muſt always ſee him *happy*; which is ſo great an *Eye-ſore* to thoſe damned Spirits that hate him, that I am apt to think, that next to being delivered out of their own *Miſery*, the chiefeſt Good they deſire or wiſh for is, to be delivered from the tormenting Senſe of his *Happineſs*. For what greater torment can our Mind endure, than to be an everlaſting Spectator of the Bliſs and Happineſs of one whom it *hates!* How then will it fret and gall our *meagre* and *envious* Spirits to ſee that bleſſed Being whom we cannot endure, ſurrounded with an infinite Happineſs; with a Happineſs ſo *vaſt*, as that it can admit of no *Increaſe*, and yet ſo *ſecure*, as that it can never ſuffer a *Diminution?* So that 'tis impoſſible, you ſee, for the Mind of Man to live happily upon God in the other life, unleſs it be inſpired before-hand with an hearty *Love* and *Affection* to him.

And hence it is that our holy Religion doth ſo ſtrictly require us *to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our ſoul, and with all our mind*, Matt. xxii. 37. *to love him becauſe he loved us firſt, to delight our ſelves in the Lord*, Pſal. xxxvii. 4. *and to rejoyce in the Lord*, Phil. iii. 1. *and to rejoyce in the Lord always*, Phil. iv. 4. *i. e.* to be habitually complacent or well pleaſed with the infinite Beauty, Goodneſs, and Perfection of the Divine Nature. Nay, of ſuch vaſt import is the Love of God in the account of the Goſpel, that 'tis there recommended as the proper Principle of Chriſtian Life. For ſo, *Rom.* xiii. 10. we are told that *love is the fulfilling of the Law*, that is, the adequate Principle

Principle of all Chriſtian Obedience; and *Gal.* v. 6. we are told that *neither Circumciſion, nor uncircumciſion availeth any thing in Chriſt Jeſus, but faith which worketh by love:* that is, there is nothing of any account with Chriſt, but ſuch a Belief of the Goſpel, as begets in us a hearty Love to God, and doth thereby work and exert it ſelf, as by that which is the only genuine Principle of Chriſtian Life and Action. 'Tis true, beſide this Principle of Love, the Goſpel acts us both by our Fear and Hope, exciting the one by Threatnings of the greateſt Evils, and animating the other with Promiſes of the greateſt Goods; but yet it is certain that neither *theſe*, nor *any other* Principles of religious Action can be acceptable to God, whilſt they are totally ſeparated from Love to him. For there is no Principle of Obedience can be acceptable to God that is not a Principle of Univerſal Obedience; but to *love* God being a great and main inſtance of Obedience, that can be no Principle of Univerſal Obedience, which doth not effectually excite us to *love* him.

'Tis true, the Religion of moſt men begins upon the Principles of Hope and Fear, and it cannot be denied but theſe are good *Beginnings*; but yet till by theſe we are excited to *love* God, as well as to do the other Parts of our Duty, our Obedience is *lame* and *partial*, and conſequently *unacceptable*. So that though Hope and Fear are good *Ingredients* to compound an acceptable Principle of Obedience, yet without an *Intermixture* of Love they are by no means ſufficient. There may be indeed, and at firſt there generally is, much

much leſs of Love in this internal ſpring of our Obedience than of Hope or Fear, whilſt yet the whole *Compoſition* is truly pleaſing and acceptable to God. For the loweſt degree of cordial Love intermixed with our Hope and Fear, is ſufficient to *leaven* and *conſecrate* them into an acceptable Principle of Obedience; but ſtill the leſs of Love there is in it, the more *weak* and *languid*, and *imperfect* it is, and in all its progreſſes towards Perfection, its *ripeneſs* and *maturity* is to be meaſured by the degrees of Love that are in it. And till our love is arrived to that degree of Fervour and Ardency, as to become the *predominant Motive* and *Maſter Ingredient* of this our compounded Principle of Obedience, our ſtate in Goodneſs is very *low* and *imperfect*. So that in ſhort, the Principle that acts and moves us in Religion, is ſtill more and more perfect, the *more* of Love there is in it, and the *leſs* of Hope and Fear; and when Hope and Fear are both ſwallowed up in Love, and this is become the ſole ſpring of Action in us, then 'tis the *Principle* of Heaven, the *Soul* that acts and animates the Religion of *juſt men made perfect*.

So that if ever we deſign to grow up to *their* bleſſed State, we muſt endeavour to *kindle* and *blow up* the Love of God in our Hearts. And in order hereunto we muſt be frequently repreſenting to our own Minds, the infinite Reaſons we have to *love* him, and preſſing our ſelves with the vaſt Obligations he hath laid upon us; ſpreading them fairly before our Thoughts in all their *endearing* Circumſtances. We muſt ever and anon ſet our *cold* and *frozen* Souls before thoſe *melting*

Flames of his Love and Beauty, and never leave *chafing* them at 'em, *urging* and *preſſing* them with the Conſideration of them, till we feel the heavenly Fire begin to *kindle* in our Boſoms. And above all things we muſt take care by the conſtant Practice of what is agreeable to Gods Nature, to *reconcile* our Minds and Tempers to him; for till this is done we can never be habitually *pleaſed* or *delighted* in him; but when once by the Practice of thoſe eternal Rules of Goodneſs that are founded in his bleſſed Nature, we have ſo far reconciled our Natures to him, as that *our* Hearts and *his* ſtand *bent* the ſame way, and are for the main alike *inclined* and *diſpoſed*, then we are prepared for, and made proper and convenient *Fuel* to receive this heavenly *Flame* of Love to him; and when this is once ſo throughly *kindled* in our Hearts, as that we are habitually *well pleaſed* and *delighted* in him, ſo as to *rejoyce* in his Happineſs, *acquieſce* in his Will, and *meditate* on his Beauty and Goodneſs, with an unfeigned *complacency* of Soul, we are then in the ſame State (that is in Kind, though not in Degree) with the bleſſed People of Heaven. And though in this Life we may not be able to raiſe our ſelves to that Height of Love as we *deſire*, and much leſs as that bleſſed Object *deſerves*, our preſent Knowledge being *ſhort*, our Thoughts *unſteady*, and our Affections *entangled* in Senſe and ſenſual things; yet when we go from hence into the other World, and are there admitted to a more intimate View of his Nature, Works, and Perfections, our imperfect Love will be immediately improved into an high Seraphick Flame. For now we ſhall not only

know

know him better, having him always in our View; and continually ſhining full in our Eyes; but we ſhall be removed from all other Objects that are apt to divert our *Thoughts*, and divide our *Affections* from him. So that now our Love being kindled and fed with the pureſt Light, with the ever outſtreaming Rays of the moſt perfect Beauty and Goodneſs, will always exert its utmoſt Vigour, and ſpend it ſelf without Decay in one continued everlaſting Rapture.

And then how unconceivably happy will our State be, when we ſhall always live in *view* of the moſt *lovely* Object, and always *love* him as much as we *are able*, and *be able* to love him a thouſand times more than we can now *imagine!* For the longer we *view*, the more we ſhall *know* him, and the more we *know*, the better we ſhall *love* him, and ſo through everlaſting Ages our Love ſhall be *ſtretching* and *extending* it ſelf upon his infinite Beauty and Lovelineſs. Now Love is naturally a moſt *ſweet* and *grateful* Paſſion, a Paſſion that *ſooths* and *raviſhes* the Heart, and puts the Spirits into a *briſk* and *generous* motion. For it wholly conſiſts in a fixed *complacency* or *well-pleaſedneſs* of Mind, ariſing from the apprehended Goodneſs and Congruity of the thing beloved; and it is meerly by accident that it hath any *diſquieting* or *ungrateful* Emotion mingled with it. Either the Perſon beloved is *abſent*, which fills it with *unquiet Deſire*; or he is *unhappy*, or *unkind*, which mingles it with *Grief* and *Sorrow*; or he is *fickle* and *inconſtant*, which imbitters it with *Rage* and *Jealouſie*; but conſider it ſeparately from all theſe Accidents, and it is nothing but pure *Delight* and

Complacency. But now in Heaven our Love of God will have none of theſe *diſquieting* Accidents attending it, for there he will never be *abſent* from us, but continually entertaining our Amorous Minds with the proſpect of his infinite Beauties; there we ſhall ever *feel* his Love to us in the moſt *ſenſible* and *endearing* Effects, even in the Glory of that Crown which he will ſet upon our Heads, and in the raviſhing Sweetneſs of thoſe Joys he will infuſe into our Hearts; there we ſhall experience the *continuation* of his Love, in the continued Fruition of all that an everlaſting Heaven means, and be convinced as well by the perpetuity of his Goodneſs to us, as by the immutability of his Nature, that he is an *unchangeable* Lover: In a word, there we ſhall find him a moſt happy Being, *happy* beyond the vaſteſt wiſhes of our Love, ſo that we ſhall not only *delight* in him as he is infinitely *lovely* and *amiable*, but *rejoyce* and *triumph* in him too as he is infinitely *bleſſed* and *happy*. For love unites the *Intereſts* as well as the *Hearts* of Lovers, and mutually *appropriates* to each, each others Joys and Felicities. So that in that bleſſed State we ſhall ſhare in the Felicity of God proportionably to the Degree of our Love to him. For the more we love him, the more we ſhall ſtill *eſpouſe* his happy Intereſt, and the more we are *intereſted* in his Happineſs, the happier we muſt be, and the more we muſt enjoy of it. Thus Love gives us a real poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of God; it makes us Co-partners with him in himſelf, and derives his Happineſs upon us, and makes it as really *ours* as *his*. So that Gods Happineſs is as it were the common *Bank* and *Treaſury* of all divine

divine Lovers, in which they have every one a *Share*, and of which proportionably to the Degrees of their Love to him, they do actually *participate* to all Eternity. And could they but love him as much as he *deſerves*, that is *infinitely*, they would be as *infinitely* bleſſed and happy as *he*. For then all *his* Happineſs would be *theirs*, and they would have the ſame delightful Senſe, and Feeling of it all, as if it were all tranſplanted into their own Boſoms. God therefore being an infinitely *lovely*, infinitely *loving*, and infinitely *happy* Being, when once we are admitted to dwell for ever in his bleſſed Preſence, our Love to him can be productive of none but *ſweet* and *raviſhing* Emotions; for the immenſe perfections it will then find in its Object, muſt neceſſarily refine it from all thoſe Fears and Jealouſies, Griefs and Diſpleaſures that are mingled with our *carnal* loves, and render it a pure *Delight* and *Complacency*. So that when once it is grown up to the Perfection of the heavenly State, 'twill be all Heaven, 'twill be an eternal Paradiſe of Delights within us, a living Spring whence Rivers of Pleaſures will iſſue for evermore. O bleſſed State, in which my heart ſhall be brim-full of Love, and my Love ſhall triumph alone within me, and be all Joy and Raviſhment, being removed for ever out of the Noiſe and Neighbourhood of all thoſe diſquieting Affections which here are wont to mingle with, and continually diſturb and incommode it!

IV. As we are rational Creatures related to *God*, we are obliged attentively to *imitate* him in all his imitable Perfections and Actions. For this

is an allowed Maxim, *Perfectiſſimum in ſuo genere eſt menſura reliquorum*, that is; that which is moſt perfect in its kind is to be the rule and meaſure of all thoſe Individual natures that are contained under it. For *Perfection* is the meaſure of *Imperfection*, even as a ſtraight Line is of a crooked, and every Individual of a kind muſt needs be ſo far *defective* in its nature, as it *falls ſhort* of that which is moſt *perfect* in its kind. God therefore being the moſt perfect of all in the whole kind of reaſonable Beings, muſt needs be the ſupreme Pattern of all thoſe Individuals that are under him; and ſo far as any of them *diſagree* with him, ſo far they are *defective* in their Natures. Ἀρχέτυπος φύσεως λογικῆς ὁ θεός ἐστι, μίμημα δὲ καὶ ἀπεικόνισμα ἄνθρωπος, *Phil. lib.* 2. *pag.* 132. *i. e.* God is the Archetype of every reaſonable Nature, and Man is his Imitation and Image. For he is a Being that is infinitely reaſonable in all his Volitions and Actions, that hath not the leaſt intermixture either of Humour or Folly, or Prejudice in his Choices, but is always, and in every thing governed by his own pure and all-comprehending Wiſdom. Upon which account he ought to be owned and looked upon by every reaſonable Being, as the Soveraign Standard and Pattern of their Natures; and ſo far as any reaſonable Nature moves or acts *counter* to his, which is the moſt *perfectly* reaſonable, ſo far it ought to be looked upon as *monſtrous* and *unnatural* in its kind. For as it is monſtrous in a Humane Body to have its parts diſplaced, its Mouth opened in its Belly, or its Legs growing out of its Shoulders, becauſe theſe are unnatural Poſitions, that are directly contrary

contrary to the true Idea, Form and Figure of a humane body; ſo every reaſonable Nature that doth not *imitate* and *take after* God's, but chuſeth and acts contrary to him, is ſo far monſtrous and miſhapen, becauſe 'tis *writhed* and *diſtorted* into a Figure that is directly contrary to its natural Pattern and Exemplar. And while it continues ſo, it is not capable of true Happineſs. For that which renders God ſo infinitely happy in himſelf, is not ſo much the Almighty Power he hath to defend himſelf from foreign Hurts and Injuries, as the exact Agreement of all his Motions and Actions, with the all-comprehending Reaſon of his own Mind. For he always ſees what is beſt, and what he ſees is beſt he always *chuſes* and *affects*, and this makes him perfectly ſatisfied with himſelf, and fills him with infinite Joy and Complacency; becauſe whenever he ſurveys himſelf in the glorious Mirrour of his own Mind, he diſcerns nothing in himſelf but what is infinitely *lovely*, nothing but what exactly correſponds with the *faireſt Ideas* of his own infinite Reaſon. Whereas if, upon an impoſſible Suppoſal, it were otherwiſe, there would ariſe a *Civil War* within his own Boſom, againſt which *Omnipotence* it ſelf could not *protect* or *defend* him. For in deſpight of himſelf he would be continually expoſed to the juſt *reproaches* of his own Mind, and his own All-ſeeing Eye would every moment *detect*, and *libel*, and *upbraid* him, and render him a moſt *inglorious* Spectacle to himſelf. So that he would be ſo far from being infinitely *pleaſed* and *ſatisfied* with himſelf, that his own infallible Reaſon would be an everlaſting *vexation* to him.

And ſo will *ours* be to us, unleſs we take care to *imitate* God in thoſe his divine Perfections, from whence his infinite *ſelf-ſatisfaction* ariſes. For ſo long as we are conſcious to our ſelves that we wilfully *ſwerve* and *deviate* from the great Exemplar of our Rational Natures, we cannot but be *aſhamed of* and *condemn* our ſelves, and be highly *diſſatisfied* with our own Actions. Our Conſcience muſt neceſſarily *reproach* our Will, and our Reaſon *upbraid* our baſe Inclinations. Now what an intolerable plague is it for a man to be forced to make *Invectives* againſt himſelf, and continually to carry his own *Satyrs* in his boſom? In this life indeed, what by *diſguiſing* our Faults with ſpecious Names, or *colouring* them over with plauſible pretences; what by *bribing* our Conſcience with falſe Preſumptions, or *diverting* our ſelves from liſtning to their reproaches by hurrying into Vice or Buſineſs, we may happily make a ſhift to deal well enough with our ſelves. But alas! what ſhall we do when we come into the other world, where all fair Colour and pretence ſhall be *wiped off*, and our Vices and We ſhall appear to our ſelves in our own *naked* and *undiſguiſed* Uglineſs; where all our falſe Preſumption ſl all be *baffled* by a woful Experience, and all the din of worldly Pleaſure and Buſineſs in which we were wont to drown the clamours of our Conſcience ſhall be for ever *ſilenced*; ſo that we ſhall be expoſed without Fence or Guard to the furious Reflections of our own Mind, and lie ſtark naked under the laſh of an enraged Conſcience for ever? O good God! what Tongue can expreſs the intolerable Anguiſh of ſuch a State; wherein our

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own Deformities ſhall be continually objected to our Eyes, and we ſhall have nothing to palliate or excuſe them, but be always forced to *condemn*, and *hate*, and *curſe* our ſelves for them, and yet not be able to *correct* and *reform* them; wherein we ſhall ſtill be hurried on to ſuch Actions by our own furious Inclinations, as when we have done them will *ſtartle* and *amaze* us, ſet on our Reaſon and Conſcience to *worry* us with their reproachful Reflections, yet in deſpight of all their Reproaches we ſhall ſtill *reiterate* and *repeat* them! Like a deſperate Murderer who having killed an innocent perſon, reflects with *Horrour* upon his own Act, *tears* his Hair, *beats* his Breaſt, *curſes* and calls himſelf a thouſand Villains; but being hereby chafed into a greater Fury, inſtead of *reforming* grows more *miſchievous*, and ſo murthers another, and then rages *afreſh*, but ſtill the more he *rages*, the more he *murthers*. And this will neceſſarily be our State in the other world, if, through our neglect of *imitating* God, we go away thither under an habitual Contrariety of nature to him. Beſides that we ſhall be wholly indiſpoſed to thoſe beatifical Acts of divine Love, Worſhip and Contemplation, in which, as I have ſhewed, a great part of the pleaſure of Heaven conſiſts. For ſince all Love is founded in Likeneſs, and Likeneſs is the effect of Imitation, how is it poſſible we ſhould love God unleſs we imitate him? and if we do not love him, what Pleaſure can we take in contemplating and adoring him?

Wherefore in proſecution of its great Deſign, which is to make us happy, the Goſpel ſtrictly

ſtrictly requires us to be always *imitating*, ſo far as they are imitable, the Perfections and Actions of our heavenly Father; to endeavour to *form* our Natures to his, to *rectifie* the Features and Lineaments of our Souls by his moſt amiable Idea; to be continually *framing* our tempers by the noble pattern of his Mercy and Goodneſs, his Juſtice, Purity, and Wiſdom; that ſo being *new caſt* as it were in the perfect mould of his Nature, we may be *transformed* into living Images of him. So *Epheſ.* v. 1. *Be ye therefore* μιμηταὶ, *imitators*, or *followers of God, as dear Children, i. e.* that ſo you may reſemble him in the Qualities of your Minds, as Children do their Parents in the Lineaments of their Bodies. And this is the ſenſe of all thoſe Evangelical Injunctions, which require us *to be pure as God is pure, merciful as he is merciful*, and *perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*; that is, to take example by God in the whole courſe of our lives, and trace and follow him in all his imitable Perfections, by *putting on that new, that god-like man*, that divine temper and diſpoſition, *which after God*, that is, according to the pattern of his Nature, *is created in righteouſneſs, and true holineſs*, *Epheſ.* iv. 24. This therefore is an eſſential part of our *Chriſtian Life*, to ſet God always before our Eyes, as the great Pattern of our Lives and Actions, and to endeavour conſtantly to write after him, and tranſcribe his Graces into our Natures; that ſo when we go away into the other World, we may carry with us at leaſt a rude and imperfect draught of his bleſſed Image upon our Minds, ſuch as when we are removed from the manifold impediments of fleſh and bloud, and the perpetual

perpetual diverſions of this ſenſible World, and admitted to a nearer view of God, may be a prevailing byaſs upon our Wills, and incline us to imitate him for ever. For if for the main we are here transformed by imitating God into a *godlike* Temper and Diſpoſition, all thoſe *involuntary contrarieties* to him, which by reaſon of our Ignorance of his Nature, of our bodily Temper, and the manifold Temptations we are here expoſed to, are ſtill remaining in our Natures, will be immediately extinguiſhed upon our arrival into the other World; where being freed from all our *miſconceptions* of God, from all the *repugnancies* of our bodily Temper to him, and from all thoſe *Temptations* that were wont to avert us from him, we ſhall have no *involuntary* Diſpoſition or Inclination in us; and then our Wills being already predominantly inclined to follow God, and take example by him, and having no contrary inclination to contend with, we ſhall preſently *attend to* and *imitate* his Perfections with the greateſt Vigour, Freedom, and Alacrity of Soul. So that now we ſhall be ſo *intenſely* fixed to chuſe and act like God, who is the Example and Pattern of our Natures, that we ſhall everlaſtingly regulate all our Motions by thoſe very eternal Laws of Reaſon, whereby he everlaſtingly wills and acts; and there is nothing will be ſo abhorrent to our Natures as an *ungodlike* Will or Action. For if, as the Apoſtle tells us, *by beholding now the glory of God in a glaſs, we are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. then doubtleſs much more ſhall we be ſo, when we behold him *face to face*. 'Tis true, as our *Knowledge* of God who is

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an infinite *Truth* can never be *abſolutely perfect*, becauſe if it were it would be an *infinite* Knowledge; ſo neither can our *Reſemblance* of him be, who is an infinite *Goodneſs*, becauſe if it were we ſhould be *infinitely* Good; both which are contradictions to the ſtate of a Creature: yet as we ſhall be *knowing* him farther and farther, ſo proportionably we ſhall be *imitating* him too through infinite Ages of Duration; and ſtill every act of our Imitation ſhall be ſo *attentive* and *vigorous*, that it ſhall leave a further impreſſion of his infinite Perfection on our Natures. So that though our *finite* Nature can never arrive to a *perfect* Likeneſs of that infinitely lovely and amiable Being, becauſe it can never be *infinitely* amiable; yet it ſhall be everlaſtingly *approaching* nearer and nearer to him, proportionably as it diſcovers more and more of his infinite Beauty and Amabilities, and be ſtill growing more *wiſe* and *pure*, more *righteous* and *benign*, according as its proſpect of the *Wiſdom*, *Purity*, *Juſtice*, and *Goodneſs* of his Nature is enlarged and extended. So that as his Beauty ſhines into us; it will ſtill imprint it ſelf upon us, and transform us into bleſſed Images of it ſelf; and then according as we are aſſimilated to the divine Nature, we ſhall ſtill partake of thoſe Joys, and Pleaſures which are inſeparable to it, and reſemble it in Bliſs as much as we do in Perfection. For as Gods *infinite* Perfection is the ſpring of his *infinite* Self-ſatisfaction, ſo from our *finite* Perfection there ſhall ever redound to us a Satisfaction equal to our *finite* Capacities. For though we ſhall never attain to *abſolute* perfection, that is to all the *poſſible Degrees* of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, which

which is the Peculiar of God; yet to Eternity we ſhall be *growing on* to it, and in every period of our growth, we ſhall be perfectly what we *ought to be*, that is, we ſhall ever *know* as much of God as is poſſible for us, our preſent State and Circumſtances conſidered; and ſo far as we *know* of him we ſhall to our utmoſt power continually *imitate* and *reſemble* him. And thus in our eternal Race to Perfection, our Wills ſhall always follow our Underſtanding, and our Underſtandings ſhall always follow God with their utmoſt Vigour and Activity; ſo that neither the *one* nor the *other* ſhall ever be deficient of any Degree of Knowledge and Goodneſs which *pro hic & nunc* is poſſible to them.

Now what an unſpeakable Satisfaction muſt this give to the Mind, when ſurveying it ſelf round about, it ſhall find every thing within it ſelf exactly as it *ought to be*; every Faculty to its utmoſt power and Capacity perfectly *correſponding* with its original pattern and Exemplar; when upon the ſtricteſt Scrutiny it will diſcover nothing within it ſelf, but what the moſt *critical* Conſcience will be forced to approve of; no Motion or Action, but what will endure the Teſt of its *ſevereſt* Reaſon: In a word, when it ſhall interchangeably turn its Eyes from God to it ſelf, and compare Grace with Grace, and Feature with Feature, and perceive what an amiable Conſent and Agreement there is between its own *Copy* and his fair *Original*; what a pure *Imitation* of God its Life is, and how exactly *Deiform* all its Motions and Actions are: when, I ſay, our bleſſed Minds ſhall always find themſelves in this *God-like* poſture and

and Condition, O! what incomparable Content and Satisfaction will they take in themſelves! With what enraviſhing pleaſure will they ever review their own Motions, which being immediately copied from the Nature of God, will be ſuch as its ſevereſt Reaſon will be always forced to commend and approve of! So that now the happy Mind will be always *triumphing* in its own Purity, and enjoy within it ſelf an everlaſting Heaven of Content and Peace; now 'twill continually be *crowned* with the Applauſes of its own Reaſon, and all its Actions will have the joyful *Echoes* of a well-pleaſed Conſcience continually reſounding after them. And thus by imitating Gods *Perfections*, we ſhall imitate his *Happineſs* too, and ſhall for ever *take after* him, not only in reſpect of the Rectitude of our Natures, but alſo in the moſt bleſſed and comfortable Enjoyment of our ſelves. Beſides that our Reſemblance of God will everlaſtingly diſpoſe us to *love*, and our Love to *contemplate* and *adore* him. For all theſe bleſſed Acts do reciprocally further and promote each other; juſt like contiguous Bodies that are placed in a Circle, the firſt of which being moved, thruſts on the ſecond, the ſecond the third, the third the laſt, if there be no more between; and then the laſt thruſts on the firſt, and ſo round again in the ſame order. So that if we carry with us into Eternity a Frame and Diſpoſition of Nature like Gods, we ſhall always ſo *imitate* as ſtill to *love* him, ſo *love* as ſtill to *contemplate* him, ſo *contemplate* as ſtill to *adore* him, ſo *adore* as ſtill to *imitate*, and *love* and *contemplate* him anew; and in this bleſſed Circle we ſhall move round

round for ever, with unſpeakable Vigour and Alacrity.

V. As we are reaſonable Creatures related to *God*, we are bound to *reſign up*, and *ſubmit* our ſelves to his bleſſed Will and Diſpoſal. For God hath a juſt Dominion over all, founded in his own infinite power, that doth not like other Dominions reſult to him from any external Acts or Atchievements, but is the eternal Prerogative of his own Nature. For he, as well as all other Beings, hath a freedom to exerciſe his own Abilities ſo far as it is *juſt* and *lawful*; but being infinitely paramount to all other Powers whatſoever, he can be ſubject to no *ſuperiour* Authority, nor conſequently be obliged by any *other* Law but that of his own Nature. So that whatſoever he *can* do, he can *juſtly* do, if it be not contrary to the infinite Perfections of his Nature. For his Power being infinite, and unconfined as well as his Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Goodneſs, doth ſufficiently warrant him to do whatſoever is conſiſtent with *them*; otherwiſe he would be infinitely powerful in vain. And therefore ſince he *can* exerciſe a Dominion over all, he muſt needs have an eternal Right to do it, ſo far as his own Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Juſtice will permit, which are the only Laws by which he can be *bounded* in the exerciſe of his infinite Power and Ability. So that while he governs us by ſuch Rules and Laws, as are convenient to his own Nature, his own Greatneſs and Power, which exalts him above all other Law or Authority, ſufficiently warrants him ſo to do. And being thus *rightfully* enthroned by the infinite Preeminence of his own Power and Majeſty,

jeſty, all other Beings ſo far as they are capable ſtand immutably obliged to *ſubmit* and *reſign* themſelves up to his Government.

But beſides that we are obliged to him as he is *God*, we are alſo bound to him as he is our *Creator*. For there is always a Power acquired by *Benefits*, where there is none *antecedently*; eſpecially where the Benefit conferr'd is no leſs than that of our Being, which is the caſe between us and God. And this is ſuch a Benefit as is ſufficient to entitle him to us, by an *abſolute* and *unalienable* Propriety, though he had no *antecedent* right of Dominion over us by vertue of his own infinite Greatneſs. So that though before he created us, or any other Being, he had free power to act any thing that lay within the compaſs of *juſt* and *lawful*, which *juſt* and *lawful* was not definable by any other Law but that of his own Nature; and though ſince his Creation his Power is no more, (ſo that he hath not acquired to himſelf any new *Power* by creating us, but only made new *Subjects* whereon to exerciſe that ancient power, and Dominion which was eternally inherent in him) yet doubtleſs by giving us our Beings, he hath laid *new* Obligations upon us to obey him. For now *deriving* our ſelves, as we do, from him, we are bound by all the ties of Equity and Juſtice to *render back* our ſelves to him, and to ſubmit thoſe powers to his Dominion, which are the effects and off-ſpring of his Bounty. For what can be more juſt and equal, than that *that* Will which is the *Cauſe* of our Beings, ſhould be the *Law* and *Rule* of our Actions; than that we ſhould ſerve him with thoſe Powers we derived from him, and render

render him back the fruits of his own Plantation? For now we are not *our own*, but *God's*, and He alone hath power to diſpoſe of us; and whenſoever we diſpoſe of our ſelves contrary to his Will and Pleaſure, we do not only *invade* his Property, but employ the ſpoils of it *againſt* him. And whilſt we continue thus doing, it is impoſſible we ſhould ever be happy. For beſides that, while we continue in Rebellion againſt him, we are in an actual Confederacy with Hell; for ſo when we are told that Rebellion is as the ſin of Witchcraft, that is, Rebellion againſt God, the meaning is, that, like Witches, we are in League with the Devil, and are liſted Volunteers under thoſe infernal powers, who for blowing the Trumpet of Rebellion in Heaven were baniſhed thence ſix thouſand years ago, and have ever ſince been raiſing Forces in this lower World againſt God; ſo that whilſt we continue with them in Defiance to God, we are in the Devils Muſter-roll, who is Captain General of all the revolted Legions, and ſo are of the quite oppoſite Party to the Loyal people of Heaven, and conſequently can never hope while we continue ſuch to be admitted to their Society and Happineſs; beſides all this, I ſay, Rebellion againſt God doth naturally draw a Hell of Miſeries after it. For it cannot be ſuppoſed that the wiſe Soveraign of the World, ſhould be ſo unconcerned for his own Authority, as to ſuffer his Creatures to *ſpurn at* and *affront* it without ever manifeſting his Diſpleaſure againſt them in ſome *dire* and *ſenſible* Effects. And therefore though in *this* Life, which is the time of our Trial and Probation, he mercifully

forbears *to lead us to Repentance*; yet if we leave this Life with our Wills *unſubdued* and *unreſigned* to him, we muſt not expect to be thus gently dealt with in the other. For it is as eaſie for him who is the Father of our Spirits, to correct our Spirits, as 'tis for the Parents of our Fleſh to correct our Fleſh. And though our Souls are no more impreſſible with *material* ſtripes, than Sun-beams are with the blows of a hammer; yet are they liable to have horrid and diſmal *thoughts* impreſſed upon them, and to be as much aggrieved by *them*, as ſenſible Bodies are with the moſt exquiſite Torments. So that if God be diſpleaſed with us, there is no doubt but he can *imprint* his Wrath upon our Minds, in black and gaſtly thoughts, and cauſe it perpetually to *drop* like burning ſulphur on our Souls. And it being in his Power thus to laſh our Spirits, to be ſure, when once he is implacably incenſed againſt us, (as he will be in the other World, if we go Rebels thither) he will more or leſs let looſe his Power upon us, and make us feel his wrathful Reſentments, by infuſing ſupernatural Horrors into our Souls, and ſcourging our guilty and defenſeleſs Spirits with inſpirations of dire and frightful Thoughts. Now though this be not a *natural* and *neceſſary* Effect of our Rebellion againſt God, becauſe it depends upon his Will who is a free Agent; yet conſidering that he is a *wiſe* Agent, and that as ſuch it is neceſſary he ſhould one way or other manifeſt his Diſpleaſure againſt ſuch as are unreclaimable Rebels to his Authority, it is *next* to a natural one; and at leaſt the fearful Expectation of it in ſuch rebellious Spirits (which is a miſery next to the enduring it)

it) is *neceſſary* and *unavoidable*. For God hath imprinted a dread of his own Power and Majeſty ſo deeply on our Natures that we are not able with all our arts of Self-deceit wholly to *obliterate* and *deface* it; and though in this life we may ſometimes *ſuppreſs* and *ſtupefie* our Senſe of God, yet even *here* in deſpight of our ſelves, 'twill ever and anon *return* upon us. And if when we have done what we know is offenſive to that inviſible Majeſty we ſtand in aw of, we do but ſuffer our ſelves ſeriouſly to *reflect* upon it, there preſently ariſes in our minds a ſwarm of *horrid* Thoughts and *diſmal* Expectations; and if in this preſent State in which we have ſo many Salvo's for our wounded Spirits, ſo many pleaſures and Self-deluſions to charm our natural dread of God, our overcharged Conſciences do notwithſtanding ſo often *recoil* upon us, and alarm us with ſuch diſmal abodings; what will they do hereafter, when all thoſe pleaſures are *removed*, and all thoſe Self-deluſions *baffled* with which we were wont to ſooth and divert them? Then doubtleſs we ſhall be continually ſtung with ſharp and dire Reflections, and our Conſciences like tragick Scenes be all hung round with the Enſigns of Horrour; then ſhall the dread of God perpetually haunt us like a grim Fury, and the terror of his offended Majeſty ſtrike us into an everlaſting Trembling and Agony. For ſo S. *James* tells us, that *the Devils themſelves do believe and tremble*, Jam. ii. 19. they believe that there is an Almighty Being above them, and are conſcious that they are in actual Rebellion againſt him, which makes them horribly afraid of his vengeance; and yet ſuch is

the inveterate deviliſhneſs of their Natures, that they will by no means hearken to a Submiſſion, but in deſpight of their own Dread and Horrour, do ſtill perſiſt in an open Defiance to their Almighty Enemy, and ſo tremble and ſin, and ſin and tremble for ever. And ſo ſhall we, if we go into the other World habitual Rebels to God; our deep and inveterate malice againſt him will ſtill hurry us on to *incenſe* and *provoke* him, and then our natural *Dread* of his Power and Majeſty will break into *frightful* and *horrible* Thoughts, and ſo be continually revenging upon us thoſe our continual provocations of him. For then our Soul will be nakedly expoſed to the laſh of its own *furious* thoughts, and have no ſhield to defend it ſelf againſt the terrors of its *guilty* Conſcience, which being rouzed up and kept awake by the *unintermitting* Senſe of our miſery, will be always *clamouring* upon us, and continually *torturing* us with black and horrid Reflections. So that whilſt we are wandring among *wretched* Ghoſts, through thoſe *diſmal* ſhades below, we ſhall be perpetually meditating *Horrours*, and never leave laſhing our ſelves with our own *ſharp* and *terrible* thoughts, till we have chafed our ſelves into *Furies*, and boiled up our ſelf-condemning Rage into an everlaſting Madneſs. Thus as our ſenſe of our *unlikeneſs* to God will ever fill us with *Shame* and *Confuſion*, ſo will the ſenſe of our *Rebellion* againſt him continually ſtrike us into *Fear* and *Amazement*.

To prevent which, our holy Religion, which doth ſo induſtriouſly conſult our Happineſs, requires us now to *ſubmit our ſelves to God*, Jam. iv. 7.

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to live to God, Gal. ii. 19. *to preſent our ſelves living ſacrifices, holy and acceptable to God*, Rom. xii. 1. *to yield our ſelves unto God, and our members as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God*, Rom. vi. 13. the ſenſe of all which is, that we ſhould endeavour, ſo to affect our Minds with the ſenſe of Gods Authority over us, and with the manifold Reaſons of our obedience to him, as to be firmly and conſtantly reſolved within our ſelves, neither to *chuſe* any thing that he *forbids*, nor to *refuſe* any thing that he *commands*; that we ſhould ſet him up a Throne in our Hearts, a *fixt* and *prevailing* Reſolution of Obedience, that therein he may ſit and reign, and have the abſolute Empire and Command of all our inward Motions, and outward Actions; in a word, that we ſhould acquire ſuch an habitual Reſpect to, and Reverence of his Soveraign Authority, that no temptation from *within* or *without* us, may be able to countermand it, or to ſeduce us from our duty into any wilful courſe of Rebellion againſt him. And when once we have framed our minds into this obediential Temper, we are in a forward preparation for Heaven. And though by reaſon of thoſe Remains and Reliques of corrupt Nature that are in us, which are here continually excited by the many Temptations among which we live, we may find *reluctant* and *counter-ſtriving* Principles within us; a *ſtubborn* Appetite contending againſt an *obedient* Will, and ſometimes upon *Surprize* or *Inadvertence* over-powering it; yet if we heartily *bewail* this as our Unhappineſs, and if when we thus fall we *weep* and *riſe again*, and take *more* care of our ſteps for the future, we ſhall

carry with us when we go from hence into the other World a Will that is habitually *reſigned* to God; and ſo being there removed from all the Temptations that were wont to excite in us thoſe contrary Appetites and Inclinations, we ſhall immediately become *all* Duty and Obedience, and freely give up our ſelves to God without the leaſt ſhadow of *Conteſt*, or *Reluctancy*. And in this bleſſed State we ſhall continue for ever, ſo *intirely* devoted to God, that between him and us there ſhall ever be one common Will, and End, and Intereſt; and our Hearts which before were in *a great meaſure* ſet and tuned to the Heart of God, will be inſtantly ſuch *perfect Uniſons* with it, that whenſoever, or whatſoever he ſpeaks, we ſhall ſtill *reſound* and *eccho* to him, from our inmoſt bowels, with unſpeakable Chearfulneſs and Alacrity.

And being thus reduced to a perfect *Submiſſion* to the Will of God, we ſhall therein find our ſelves incomparably happy. For now our Wills being always determined by the Will of God, we ſhall be perfectly eaſed of all the *Trouble* and *Diſtraction* of chuſing. Now our Minds will no longer hover in *Suſpence*, nor be divided between *contrary* Reaſons, but all its thoughts will glide gently on in a calm and even Current, without ever being toſſed and bandied to and fro by *croſs* and *oppoſite* Deliberations. For now it no ſooner knows the Will of God, but it reſts in it immediately with a *free* Aſſent, and *uncontrolled* Approbation; ſo that upon *new* Occaſions it's free from the trouble of forming *new* Choices and Reſolutions, being already fixt under all Events to one

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ſteady Courſe of Motion, and *immovably* reſolved whatever befals, ever to do what God would have it. And its will thus perfectly acquieſcing in God as in its proper Place and Element, it will no longer diſpute as it was wont to do, no longer waver between two Loadſtones, but always obey upon the firſt Motion, and follow him for ever without Deliberation. In which happy ſtate we ſhall be no longer ground between thoſe *countermoving* Milſtones, *the law in our Minds*, and *the law in our Members*, but being intirely *reſigned* to God we ſhall ever obey him *ſecundo flumine*, with a full Current of Inclination, and Nature. And what a mighty Eaſe muſt this be to the Soul; eſpecially conſidering that by being thus entirely ſubject to God, it will not only be releaſed from the *Trouble* of chuſing and deliberating, but alſo throughly warranted of the *Goodneſs* and *Rectitude* of its own Choice. For ſo far as we are ſubject unto God, *our* Wills are *his*, and ſo are our Actions too; and whilſt they are ſo, we can have no reaſon to miſtruſt, either that they are *bad* in themſelves, or that he is *angry* and *diſpleaſed* at them. For his Will we know is governed by his Nature, which is the *Standard* of Good and Evil, the *Law* and *Meaſure* of Right or Wrong; ſo that while we *will* and *act* as he would have us, we have a ſufficient warrant for what we do; a warrant that will for ever *bear us out*, and *juſtifie* us to our own Minds, and always render us abundantly *ſatisfied* with our ſelves; ſo that we ſhall not only always *acquit*, but always *reverence* our ſelves, and our Conſcience will not only ceaſe to *ſhame* us, but be continually *applauding* and *ſmiling* upon

us; and inſtead of thoſe importunate *Clamours* with which it was wont to entertain us, its conſtant eccho to all our actions will be, *Well done good and profitable ſervant.* So that being entirely determined by the Will of God, which never varies from the Law of his Nature, we ſhall be perfectly *ſatisfied* with our ſelves and for ever *chuſe* and *act* without the leaſt *Miſtruſt* or *Heſitance.* And then our Wills being perfectly ſubject to his, and all our powers of action entirely at his Devotion, we ſhall never have the leaſt ground to fear or ſuſpect his *Diſpleaſure*, but be always fully ſatisfied that he *loves* us, that we are *dear* and *precious* in his Eyes, and that to Eternity he will *reſpect* and *look upon* us with the ſmiles of an unchangeable Complacency. The ſenſe of which will raviſh our Hearts, and for ever fill us *with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* So that whereas rebellious Souls are perpetually haunted with two reſtleſs Furies, *viz.* the *ſhame* of their *guilt* and the *fear* of their *danger*, which even here do give them more *diſturbance* than all their ſins can *pleaſure*, and *delights*; when once we are perfectly *ſubjected* to God, we ſhall be for ever diſcharged of them *both*, and then will our happy minds be always as *courageous* as Truth, and as *confident* as Innocence it ſelf.

And as by our perfect *Submiſſion* to God, we ſhall be wholly releaſed from the *trouble* of chuſing, and ſufficiently warranted in our own *Choices*, ſo we ſhall be abundantly *ſatisfied* both of the Wiſdom and Succeſs of them. For then we ſhall be aſſured, even by a ſweet and happy Experience, that whatſoever God commands us to

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do he moſt certainly knows that it is for our good, and that *that* is the Reaſon why he commands it. So that when we are entirely *ſubjected* to God, our Choices and Actions will be all directed by an infallible Wiſdom to our own good. For while we chuſe what God would have us, our Wills are guided by Gods Wiſdom, and ſo in every genuine act of Obedience we are as *infallible* as Omniſcience it ſelf. When therefore we are perfectly *reſigned* to God, we ſhall always Will and act with as much *Confidence* and *Aſſurance* of a happy and proſperous Succeſs, as if we our ſelves were infinitely wiſe, and had a perfect Comprehenſion of all poſſible Iſſues and Events. And whilſt wretched Rebels grope about under the Conduct of their own blind Wills, and for the moſt part do they know not *what*, and go they know not *where* themſelves, but live by *chance*, and act *at random*; our Wills and Actions being wholly ſteered by an All-wiſe Will, that never fails to meaſure them by the beſt Rules, and point them to the beſt Ends, we ſhall be always ſure of our hands, and know infallibly before-hand that every thing we *will* or *do* ſhall conſpire to our own good. And this will enable us to perform the everlaſting Race of our Obedience, with an unſpeakable Freedom and Alacrity, and always render us wondrous light, and nimble, and expedite in our Operations. For whereas when men know not what may happen upon ſuch an Action, and are not able to pry out all thoſe hidden Events, that lurk in the Womb of their own Deſigns, they always act with *Caution* and *Anxiety*, and are *doubtful* and *tremulous* in their Motions; when once

once we are ſure of a good Event, we ſtill go on with Courage, and Chearfulneſs; and ſo we ſhall ever do, when we ever perfectly *will* and *act* under the command of God. For now we ſhall always ſee good Iſſues before us, and be firmly aſſured from that infallible Wiſdom which governs *his* Will, and by his *ours*, that every thing we Will or Do ſhall be crowned with a happy Effect. And this will for ever wing our Souls with an unwearied Vigour and Activity, and render each act of our Obedience unſpeakably *ſweet* and *delightful* to us. And now, O bleſſed mind! what Tongue or Thought can reach thy happineſs; who living in a moſt perfect Subjection to an All-good and All-wiſe Will, art never in the leaſt concerned or troubled to *debate* and *deliberate* what to chuſe, but doſt everlaſtingly embrace and follow what an infinite Goodneſs, and an infinite Wiſdom hath *choſen* for thee!

VI. As we are reaſonable Creatures related to *God*, we are alſo obliged chearfully to *truſt in*, and *depend upon* him. For as he is the Prop and Center of all the mouldering Creation, the Almighty *Atlas*, that bears it upon his ſhoulders, and keeps it from ſinking into Ruine, we and every Creature in Heaven and Earth do hang upon him, and draw our breath from him, and if he ſhake us off but for a moment, we preſently drop into nothing and periſh. For could we exiſt of our ſelves this *preſent* moment, we might as well have done ſo the moment *before*, and may as well do ſo the moment *after*, and ſo backwards and forward to all Eternity; and unleſs we had ſuch a Fulneſs of Eſſence in us, as to exiſt of our ſelves from

from all eternity paſt to all eternity to come, it is impoſſible we ſhould exiſt ſo much as one *moment* without new ſupplies from the infinite and independent Fountain of Being. And what can be more fit or reaſonable than that we who are thus born up by him, ſhould freely *truſt in*, and *depend upon* him; than that we ſhould build our Hope upon the Prop of our Exiſtence, and make him the Stay of our Confidence in whom *we live and move and have our being?* Eſpecially conſidering what a proper Object of Truſt and Dependence he is; and that not only as he is the ſoveraign Diſpoſer of all thoſe Iſſues and Events which concern us, but alſo as he is infinitely Wiſe, and always underſtands what is *good* or *hurtful* to us, and as he ſtands engaged both by his own *eſſential* Goodneſs, and *free* Promiſe never to fail thoſe that put their Truſt in him, but to manage all their Affairs to their everlaſting Intereſt and Advantage. And in whom can we more rationally *confide* than in a Being of infinite Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Power; that always *knows* what is beſt for us, that always *wills* what he *knows* ſo, and always *does* what he *wills?* All which conſidered, it's certainly incomparably more to our Intereſt and Advantage, that our concerns ſhould lie in his hands, and be managed as he ſees beſt, than that every thing ſhould happen to us according to our own Will and Deſire. For there are innumerable things which in the natural Series and Order of Cauſes are *concomitant* and *conſequent* to every Event, the greateſt part of which are out of the Sphere of our Cognizance; by reaſon of which it is impoſſible for us to make an infal-

infallible Judgment of the *good* or *evil* of any Event that befals us; becauſe though we may be ſecure that ſuch an Event *ſingly* and *apart* by it ſelf may be *good* or *evil* for us, yet for all we know there may be ſuch Concomitants or Conſequents inſeparable to it, as may quite alter its Nature, and render that *evil*, which conſidered *ſingly* may be good for us, or that *good* which conſidered *ſingly* may be evil. We earneſtly wiſh for ſuch an Event, and are very confident it would be mighty advantageous to us; but alas! if *it* ſhould befal us, according to the Series of things a thouſand *others* muſt, and what they will prove we are not able to prognoſticate; but for all we know, the Miſchief of *them* may abundantly outweigh the Benefit of *this*. And this being ſo, how extremely unfit are we to make Choices for our ſelves, ſince in moſt particulars 'tis almoſt an equal lay whether what we chuſe will prove our *Food* or our *Poyſon?* But now God being the ſupreme Orderer and Diſpoſer of things, and having the *firſt* Link of every Chain of Cauſes in his own hands, muſt needs have an intire Comprehenſion of all the *intermediate* ones, from the beginning to the end; and his Power being not only the cauſe of all *actual* Events, but alſo of the *poſſibility* of thoſe that ſhall never be actual, he muſt needs diſcern the utmoſt Iſſues and Concomitants of every *poſſible*, as well as of every *future* Event, and perfectly underſtand not only what *will* be beneficial or injurious to us, but alſo what *might* be ſo. So that 'tis impoſſible for him to be miſtaken in his Choices, becauſe he knows as well before hand what things *would* be to us if they

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were, as what they *are* when they do *actually* exiſt. Upon the whole therefore 'tis doubtleſs of ineſtimable advantage to us, to be in the hands of God; and verily next to Hell it ſelf, I know nothing that is more formidable than for God to let us alone, and give us up to our own Wills and Deſires. And ſhould he call to us from Heaven, and tell us, that he was reſolved to croſs our Deſires no more, but to comply with all our Wiſhes, let the Event prove good or bad, we ſhould have juſt reaſon to look upon our ſelves as the moſt *forlorn* and *abandoned* Creatures on this ſide Hell, as Perſons excluded from the greateſt Bleſſing that belongs to a Creature; and if we had any hope of his re-acceptance of us, it would be infinitely our Intereſt to reſign back our ſelves, and all our concerns to him, and on our bended knees to beſeech him above all things not to leave us to *our ſelves*, or throw us from *his* Care and Conduct. It being therefore upon all accounts ſo highly fit and reaſonable, and ſo much to our Intereſt and Advantage, that we ſhould freely *truſt* our ſelves, & all our Affairs into the hands of God, and *depend* upon him for the good ſucceſs of all our honeſt Endeavours and Undertakings; that we ſhould acquieſce in his Diſpoſal of things, and under all outward Events be pleaſed and ſatisfied with his Conduct, as knowing that howſoever things may happen to us, they cannot be otherwiſe than as the wiſe and good God is pleaſed either to permit, or to order and determine them; this, I ſay, being ſo fit in it ſelf, and ſo much for our Intereſt, it is impoſſible that without it we can be happy either here or hereafter. For ſince both our Being and Well-being

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are wholly dependent on the Will of God, and we can neither *be*, nor be *happy* one moment longer than he pleaſes, how is it poſſible we ſhould ever be *quiet*, and *ſatisfied* in our own minds without a great *Aſſurance* of, and *Confidence* in him? When we conſider what a mighty Stake we have in his hands, how all our Fortunes lie at his feet, and how eaſily he can frown us into *nothing*, or ſpurn us into a Condition ten thouſand times *worſe* than nothing when ever he pleaſes, how can we be otherwiſe *ſecure* in our own minds, or avoid being externally *anxious* and *ſolicitous*, but by firmly *relying* on his Truth and Goodneſs; to the want of which is to be attributed all that *carking* Care, *tormenting* Fear, and *diſquieting* Thoughtfulneſs, which perpetually haunts the minds of men. They are ſenſible that their condition is dependent, and that it is not in their own Power, either to make it what they would have it, or to ſecure and continue it when it is made ſo; they know that by a thouſand Chances which in deſpight of their Foreſight or Power may happen, the next moment either themſelves may be ſnatched from what they poſſeſs, or what they poſſeſs may be ſnatched from them; they find that their moſt probable Deſigns are liable to innumerable Miſcarriages, and that when they have formed their Projects never ſo wiſely, there are infinite croſs Accidents may intercur and daſh them in pieces; and in this uncertain State of their Affairs, they either think not of God at all, but live at the Courteſie of a fickle Chance, and leave themſelves to be toſſed, and bandied to and fro at the pleaſure of a blind and undeſigning Fortune,

Fortune, upon whoſe ever-moving Wheel their wearied thoughts can never reſt; or if they think of God, it is with great *Miſtruſt* and *Deſpondency*; they fear he will not be regardful enough of them, nor prove ſo kind to them as they could wiſh, and are poſſeſt with an obſtinate Opinion that 'twould be much better for them to be their own Carvers, than to live at his Diſpoſal and allowance. And hence proceed all thoſe Anxieties and Diſcontents, thoſe *fretting* Cares, *diſmaying* Fears, *perplexing* and *miſgiving* Thoughts, which do continually gaul and diſquiet them; and from theſe their thorny diſquietudes it is impoſſible they ſhould ever be wholly free, no not in Heaven it ſelf, till they have wrought their Minds to a perfect *Truſt* and *Confidence* in God. For we ſhall be altogether as dependent upon God for our *heavenly*, as we are for our *earthly* Happineſs; becauſe, though all thoſe Acts of heavenly Virtue, in which our heavenly Happineſs conſiſts, will be much *more* in our own Power, than any of theſe worldly goods are, yet they will be no *longer* in our Power than God ſhall think fit to enable us to chuſe, and act, and to ſupport us in our Being and Exiſtence, which then we ſhall ſenſibly perceive entirely depends upon the All-enlivening vigour of his vital breath. And therefore though he hath *promiſed* to continue our being in that moſt bleſſed State for ever, yet unleſs we perfectly *truſt* in his Veracity, our Minds will be continually diſturbed with anxious and miſgiving Thoughts; we ſhall be afraid leſt one time or other he ſhould forget his Promiſe, and upon ſome unknown Reaſon or Emergency withdraw from us that influence of his

his All-upholding Power, upon which our Being and well-being depends, and let us drop into Nothing. And the *greater* our Happineſs is, the *more* we ſhould *be* afraid of loſing it; becauſe we ſhould be always ſenſible that it entirely depends upon the Pleaſure of God, whoſe Truth and Goodneſs, we cannot perfectly *confide* in. So that were we placed in the midſt of Heaven with a *miſgiving*, *diſtruſtful* Mind of God, *that* would imbitter all the joys of it, and give them a harſh and ungrateful Farewel. For the *fearful* Apprehenſions we ſhould continually have of being thruſt out of Heaven again, and tumbled headlong from all our Glory, would be ſuch a *continual* Affliction to us, that we ſhould even *pine away* our happy Eternity, for fear of being eternally deprived of it. So impoſſible it is for any dependent Being to be happy, without an entire *Truſt* and *Confidence* in God upon whom its Being and Happineſs depends.

And therefore the Goſpel to render our future Happineſs compleat, endeavours to train us up before-hand to a firm and perfect *Confidence* in God, by making it an eſſential part of our duty to *commit the keeping of our ſouls to God in well-doing*, 1 Pet. iv. 19. *to truſt in the living God who gives us all things richly to enjoy*, 1 Tim. vi. 17. *not to truſt in our ſelves, but in God who raiſeth the dead*, 2 Cor. i. 9. *to believe in God*, and not to be troubled at any Events which happen to us in this world, *John* xiv. 1. and *not to caſt away our confidence*, Heb. x. 35. and the like; the Senſe of all which is, to preſs and engage us to a conſtant and chearful *Reliance* upon God, and to endeavour

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to affect our minds with a deep ſenſe of his over-ruling Providence, and a full Aſſurance of the Goodneſs of all thoſe great Deſigns he is driving on in the world; and accordingly to *acquieſce* in, and *embrace* all Events as the tokens of his Love and Favour, and always to live upon this Perſuaſion, that it is infinitely better for us to be in Gods hands than in our own, and that he knows much better how to diſpoſe of us, and our affairs than we do, and that he will take care to diſpoſe of them as much to our advantage as we our ſelves ſhould, if *we* knew as much as *he* doth. Now though by reaſon of thoſe ſtrong Impreſſions which ſenſible things in this Life of Senſe make upon us, we ſhould not always be able ſo firmly to *rely* upon, and *repoſe* our ſelves in Gods inviſible Power, as not to be at all diſquieted about the Iſſues and Events of things; yet if by frequent acts of *Truſt* and *Reliance* on him, we have ſo diſpoſed our minds to *confide* in him, as that by looking up to his over-ruling Providence, we can *ordinarily* ſtay and ſupport our ſelves, amidſt the Changes and Revolutions of this world; if when a ſtorm of Adverſity hangs lowring over, or ſhowres down upon us, we can flie to God for ſhelter, and promiſe our ſelves Safety and Protection under the out-ſtretched wings of his Providence; in a word, if when we ſmart, we can *ordinarily* hope in him, and reſt perſuaded that under his gracious Conduct and Diſpoſal, all things ſhall work together for our good; this our *imperfect*, *wavering* Hope and Dependance, ſhall in the other life be immediately ripened into a moſt perfect *Confidence*, and *Aſſurance*. For there we

ſhall be wholly removed from this Life of Senſe, by which our *Truſt* in Gods inviſible Providence is very much *weakned* and *diſtracted*; and beſides we ſhall have much *quicker* apprehenſions of his Nature, and of the infinite Reaſons we have to *confide* in him. And then when after all the threats of a tempeſtuous Voyage, we ſhall find our ſelves landed in a bleſſed World, and poſſeſſed of all its promiſed Glories, this mighty *Experiment* of Gods Fidelity and Goodneſs, will immediately ſettle our prediſpoſed minds, into ſuch an immovable *Confidence* in him, as that from thenceforth no *Fear* or *Diſtruſt* will ever find the leaſt acceſs to our thoughts, but we ſhall be ſo perfectly aſſured of his Truth and Goodneſs, that though we ſhall feel our ſelves ſuſtained and bleſt every moment by the arbitrary Influences of his Benignity and Power, yet we ſhall be as *confident* for ever of the continuance of our bliſs, as we could be, if we did *ſelf-exiſt*, and held the eternity of our Being and Happineſs as independently as God doth *his*. For though our Condition will be ever *dependent*, yet 'twill be ever dependent upon ſuch a foundation as can no more fail than Gods own Life and Being; *viz.* upon his Veracity and Goodneſs, both which are ſo eſſential to him, as that he cannot exiſt without them. And knowing our ſelves ſo firmly ſecured in this our dependent State, as that we can never ſink unleſs God himſelf ſink under us, we ſhall be to all Eternity not only as *ſafe*, but as *ſatisfied* in it, as if we were every one a God to himſelf; and in this bleſſed Security we ſhall quietly enjoy God and our ſelves for ever. So that our *Truſt* and *Confidence* in God

God will crown the Pleaſure of all our other Virtues, by giving us full Security of an everlaſting Fruition of it. For now the raviſhed mind will have no *fear* or *diſtruſt* to cramp or arreſt it, in its bleſſed operations; no *anxious* Thoughts of a ſad futurity to ſowre its preſent enjoyments; but 'twill enjoy *all* Heaven every moment, in a fearleſs Security of enjoying it *all* for ever. And when it ſhall perfectly *love*, *contemplate* and *adore* God, with a ſure and certain *Confidence*, of *contemplating*, *loving* and *adoring* him perfectly for ever, O! how unſpeakably will this enhance the Pleaſure of thoſe beatifical Acts! For now in every moment of all our bleſſed Eternity, we ſhall ſtill have the Joy of a bleſſed Eternity to come; and beſides all thoſe Pleaſures which each preſent moment of our heavenly Life ſhall abound with, we ſhall ſtill have the Pleaſure of a proſpect of infinite Ages of Pleaſure. And thus the bleſſed mind, you ſee, by its perfect *Dependance* upon God, conſummates its own Heaven, and ſecures it ſelf for ever in a moſt quiet and undiſturbed Enjoyment of it.

By all which I think it ſufficiently appears, how much each of theſe *Divine Virtues*, which as rational Creatures we are obliged to exert, and exerciſe upon *God*, contributes to our Heavenly Happineſs; and conſequently, how indiſpenſably neceſſary our preſent Practice of them is to *diſpoſe* and *capacitate* us to enjoy it.

SECT. III.

Concerning the Social Virtues, *shewing that these also are included in the Heavenly Part of the* Christian Life, *and that in their Natures they very much contribute to our* Heavenly Happiness.

Man of all sublunary Creatures is the most adapted for *Society*. For though the greatest part of other Creatures do *covet* Society, as well as he, yet *he* alone is furnished with that gift of Nature which renders Society most *pleasant* and *useful*, and that is the gift of *Speech*. By Means of which we can express our Thoughts, and maintain a mutual Intelligence of Minds, with one another; and thereby divert our Sorrows, mingle our Mirth, impart our Secrets, communicate our Counsels, and make mutual Compacts and Agreements to supply and assist each other. And in these things consists the greatest *Use* and *Pleasure* of Society. And as of all Creatures we are the best *fitted* for Society, so we stand in the greatest *need* of it. For as for other Creatures, after they come into the World they are much *sooner* able to help themselves than *we*; and after we are most able to help our selves, there are a world of Necessaries and Conveniences *without* which we cannot be happy, and *with* which we cannot be supplied without each others aid and assistance; which in an *unsociable* State of Life we should of all Creatures in the World be the most indispos'd to render to one another. For as *Aristotle de Repub. lib.* 1. *pag.* 298. hath observed,

obſerved, Ὥσπερ γὰρ τελειωθὲν βέλτιστον πάντων ζώων ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν, οὕτω καὶ χωρισθὲν νόμου καὶ δίκης χεῖριστον πάντων· As man in his perfect ſtate is the beſt of all Animals, ſo ſeparated from Law and Right he is the worſt. For out of Society we ſee his Nature preſently degenerates, and inſtead of being inclined to aſſiſt, grows always moſt ſalvage and barbarous to his own kind. Since therefore we have ſo much need of each others help, Society is abſolutely neceſſary to cheriſh and preſerve in us our natural Benevolence towards one another, without which inſtead of being mutually *helpful*, we ſhould be mutually *miſchievous*. For as the ſame Philoſopher hath obſerved, Ὁ δὲ μὴ δυνάμενος κοινωνεῖν, ἢ μηδὲν δεόμενος δι' αὐτάρκειαν, οὐθὲν μέρος πόλεως, ὥστε ἢ θηρίον, ἢ θεός· *Id. Ibid.* He that cannot contract Society with others, or through his own Self-ſufficiency doth not need it, belongs not to any Commonwealth, but is either a wild Beaſt, or a God. We being therefore ſo framed for Society, and under ſuch neceſſities of entring into it, it hence neceſſarily follows, that being *aſſociated* together, we are all obliged in our ſeveral Ranks and Stations ſo to behave our ſelves towards one another as is moſt for the *Common Good* of All; and that ſince the Happineſs of each *particular* Member of our Society redounds from the Welfare of the *Whole*, and is involved in it, we ought to eſteem nothing good for *our ſelves* that is a Nuiſance to the *Publick*. Becauſe whatſoever *this* ſuffers, I and every man ſuffer; and unleſs I could be happy *alone*, that can never be for my Intereſt in *particular*, that is againſt my Intereſt

in *common*. Now in ſuch a mutual Behaviour as moſt conduces to our common Benefit and Happineſs as we are in Society with one another, conſiſts all *Social Virtue*; the proper Uſe and Deſign of which is to preſerve our Society with one another, and to render it a common Bleſſing to us all. And hereunto five things are neceſſary, *viz.*

1. That we be *charitably* diſpoſed towards one another.

2. That we be *juſt* and *righteous* in all our Intercourſes with each other.

3. That we behave our ſelves *peaceably* in our reſpective States and Relations.

4. That we be very *modeſt* towards thoſe that are *Superiour* to us in our Society, whether it be in Deſert or Dignity.

5. That we be very *treatable* and *condeſcending* to all that are *Inferiour* to us. Under theſe Particulars are comprehended all thoſe *Social Virtues* upon which the Welfare and Happineſs of Humane Society depends. Now that the Practice of all theſe is included in the *Chriſtian Life*, and doth effectually conduce to our everlaſting Happineſs, I ſhall endeavour particularly to prove. And

I. As rational Creatures *aſſociated* and ſo related to *one another*, we are obliged to be *kindly* and *charitably* diſpoſed towards each other. For the end of our Society being mutually to *aid* and *aſſiſt* one another; it is neceſſary in order hereunto that we ſhould every one be *kind* and *benevolent* to every one, that ſo we may be continually inclined mutually to aid and do good Offices to one another.

another. And ſo far as we fall ſhort of *this*, we fall ſhort of the End of our Society. For to be ſure the leſs we *love* one another, the leſs prone we ſhall be to *promote* and *further* each others Welfare, and conſequently the leſs Advantage we ſhall reap from our mutual Society. But if inſtead of *loving*, we *malign* and *hate* each other, our Society will be ſo far from contributing to our Happineſs, that it will be only a means of rendring us more *miſerable*. For it will only furniſh us with fairer Opportunities of doing *Miſchief* to one another, and that mutual Intercourſe we ſhall have by being united together in Society will ſupply us with greater Means and Occaſions to wreak our *ſpight* upon each other. For Society puts us within each others reach, and by that means (if we are enemies) renders us more *dangerous* to one another; like two adverſe Armies, which when they are at a Diſtance can do but little hurt, but when they are joyned and mingled never want opportunities to deſtroy and butcher one another. So that *Hatred* and *Malice*, you ſee, renders our Society a Plague, and we were much better live *apart* poorly and ſolitarily, and withdraw from one another as Beaſts of Prey do into their ſeparate Dens, than continue in one anothers reach, and be always liable, as we muſt be while we are in Society, to be *baited* and *worried* by one another.

And as *Hatred* and *Malice* ſpoils all our Society in *this* Life, and renders it worſe than the moſt diſmal Solitude, ſo it will alſo in the *other*. For whenſoever the Souls of men do leave their Bodies, they doubtleſs flock to the Birds of their

own Feather, and conſort themſelves with ſuch ſeparate Spirits as are of their own Genius and Temper. For beſides that good and bad Spirits are by the eternal Laws of the other World diſtributed into two *ſeparate* Nations, and there live *apart* from one another, having no other Communication or Intercourſe but what is between two Hoſtile Countries that are continually deſigning and attempting one againſt another; ſo that when wicked Souls do leave this Terreſtrial Abode and paſs into Eternity, they are preſently incorporated by the Laws of that inviſible State into the Nation of wicked Spirits, and confined for ever to their moſt wretched Society and Converſe; beſides this, I ſay, *Likeneſs* doth naturally *congregate* Beings, and incline them to aſſociate with thoſe of their own Kind. Now *Rancour* and *Malice* is the proper Character of the Devil, and the natural Genius of Hell; and conſequently 'tis by a malicious Temper of Mind that we are *naturalized* before-hand Subjects of the Kingdom of Darkneſs, and qualified for the Converſation of Furies. So that when we go from hence into Eternity, this our *malignant* Genius will render us utterly averſe to the *friendly* Society of Heaven, and naturally preſs and incline us to conſort with that wretched Nation of *ſpightful* and *rancorous* Spirits, with whom we are already joyned by a Likeneſs and Communion of Natures. But O! much better were it for us to be ſhut up all alone for ever in ſome dark Hole of the World, where we might converſe only with our own melancholy Thoughts, and never hear of any other being but our ſelves, than to be continually plagued with

with ſuch vexatious Company! For though we who are Spectators only of *Corporeal* Action, cannot diſcern the manner how one Spirit acts upon another; yet there is no doubt but *Spiritual* Agents can ſtrike as immediately upon Spirits, as *bodily* Agents can upon Bodies; and ſuppoſing that theſe can mutually act upon one another, there is no more doubt but they can mutually make each other feel each others *Pleaſures* and *Diſpleaſures*, and that according as they are more or leſs *powerful*, they can more or leſs *aggrieve* and *afflict* one another. And if ſo, what can be expected from a company of *ſpightful* and *malicious* Spirits joyned in Society together, but that their Converſation ſhould be a continual Intercourſe of mutual *Miſchiefs* and *Vexations?* eſpecially conſidering how they *here* laid the foundation of an eternal Quarrel againſt one another. For *there* all thoſe Companions in Sin will meet, who by their ill *Counſels*, wicked *Inſinuations*, and bad *Examples* did mutually contribute to each others Ruine; and being met in ſuch a *woful* State; how will the tormenting ſenſe of thoſe irreparable injuries they have done each other, whet their *Fury* againſt, and incite them to *play the Devils* with one another? And what can be expected from ſuch a Company of *waſpiſh* Beings, ſo implacably incenſed againſt one another, but that being ſhut up together in the infernal Den, they ſhould be perpetually *hiſſing* at, and *ſtinging* each other? But then beſides thoſe mutual plagues which theſe furious Spirits muſt be ſuppoſed to inflict upon one another, they will be alſo nakedly expoſed to the powerful Malice of the *Devils* thoſe fierce Execu-

Executioners of Gods righteous Vengeance, who, as we now find by Experience, have power to ſuggeſt *black* and *horrid* Thoughts to us, and to *torture* our Souls with ſuch dreadful Imaginations as are far more ſharp and exquiſite than any *bodily* Torments. And if *now* they have ſuch Power over us, when God thinks fit to let them looſe, what will they have *hereafter*, when our wretched Spirits ſhall be wholly abandoned to their Mercy, and they ſhall have free Scope to exerciſe their Fury upon us, and glut their *hungry* Malice with our Griefs and Vexations; It ſeems at leaſt a mighty probable Notion, that *that* horrid Agony of our Saviour in the Garden which cauſed him to ſhriek and groan, and ſweat as it were great Drops of Bloud, was chiefly the effect of thoſe *preternatural* Terrors, which the Devils, with whom he was then conteſting, *impreſſed* upon his innocent Mind. And if they had ſo much Power over his *pure* and *mighty* Soul, that was ſo ſtrongly guarded with the moſt *perfect* and *unſpotted* Virtues, what will they have over ours when we are abandoned to them, and thrown as Preys into their Mouths? With what an Helliſh Rage will they fly upon our *guilty* and *timorous* Souls, in which there is ſo much Tinder for their injected Sparks of Horror to take fire on?

Since therefore *Rancour* and *Malice* doth ſo naturally incline and hurry our Souls towards the wretched Society of Devils and damned Spirits, the Goſpel which ſo induſtriouſly conſults our Happineſs, takes all poſſible Care to train us up in *Charity* and mutual *Love*; and makes it a Principal, as well as neceſſary part of our *Chriſtian Life*;

Life; heartily to *love one another*. For this, as our Saviour tells us, is the Darling Precept which lay next to his Heart, *this is my Commandment that ye love one another*, John xv. 12. And accordingly we are bid not only *to follow after Charity*, 1 Cor. xiv. 1. and *to do all things with Charity*, 1 Cor. xvi. 14. but alſo *to put on Charity above all things*, Col. iii. 14. and to *dwell in Love*, which the Apoſtle tells us, is to *dwell in God who is Love*, 1 Joh. iv. 16. The intent of all which is, to oblige us to bear an univerſal *good Will* to all, and to take an hearty *Complacency* in all that are truly lovely; to be ready to contribute to and rejoyce in every ones *Good* and *Welfare*, and in a word, to live in the continual exerciſe of all thoſe *charitable* Offices which our preſent State and Condition requires and calls for. To be *courteous* & *affable*, and to treat all thoſe we converſe with with an obliging Look, a gentile Deportment, and endearing Language. To be *long-ſuffering*, *mild* and *eaſie to be entreated*; not to break forth into Rage and Storm upon every petty Provocation, and when we are juſtly provoked, not to ſuffer our Diſpleaſure to feſter into *Malice* and *Rancour*, but to be forward and eaſie to be reconciled. To be of a *compaſſionate* and *ſympathizing* Temper, and to rejoyce with thoſe that rejoyce, and weep with thoſe that weep. To be *candid* Interpreters of Men and their Actions; to be ready to *mitigate* and *excuſe* their Faults, and put *fair* Comments on their Actions; and to be ſo far from making *malicious* Gloſſes on their *innocent* Meaning, from *proclaiming* their Miſcarriages and *rejoycing* in their Falls, as not to believe ill of them but upon undeniable Evidence, and when

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we are forced to do so, to *pity* and *lament* them, and *endeavour*, and *pray*, and *hope* for their Reformation. In short, to be *benign* and *bountiful* to the necessitous and distressed, and to endeavour according to our Ability to allay their Sorrows, remove their Oppressions, support them under their Calamities, and counsel them in their Doubts; to be ready to every good Work, and like Fields of Spices to be scattering our Perfumes through all the Neighbourhood; and all this out of an *honest* and *sincere* purpose to promote their Good, and not meerly to acquire to our selves a popular Vogue and Reputation. All which are essential parts of that Charity which the Gospel enjoyns us to exercise towards one another. For so the Apostle assures us, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Charity suffereth long, and is kind, charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil, rejoyceth not in iniquity, but rejoyceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

Now though there be several Acts of Charity that will cease for ever in Heaven, such as *long-suffering*, *giving of Alms*, and *forgiving of Injuries*, and the like; because among the People of Heaven there will be none of the Faults or Miseries about which *these* Acts are conversant; yet even the Practice of *these* is indispensably necessary to *temper* and *dispose* our Minds to heavenly Charity, which till we are *disposed to* by universal Love, we shall never be capable of *exercising*; but since all virtuous Dispositions are acquired by Acts, it is impos-

impoſſible we ſhould acquire the Diſpoſition of univerſal Love, unleſs we univerſally practiſe it. 'Tis by *giving Alms* that we muſt acquire cordial Charity to the *poor* and *needy*; and by *forgiving Injuries* that we muſt diſpoſe our ſelves to love thoſe that *offend* us. For theſe Acts are *Cauſes* as well as *Signs* of a charitable Temper, and are neceſſary not only to *ſignifie* it where it *is*, but alſo to *produce* it where it is *not*. When therefore by acting all thoſe Parts of Charity which are proper to *this* as well as the *other* State, we have acquired this bleſſed Diſpoſition of *univerſal Charity*, our Minds are fairly *framed* & *tempered* for the Society of Heaven. And though in the perpetual Juſtle and Tumult of this World ſome little *Piques* and *Diſpleaſures* ſhould now and then ariſe in our Minds, yet if in the *cool* and *ſtanding* Temper of our Souls we are hearty Well-wiſhers to all Men, and hearty Lovers of all that do in any meaſure *love* and *reſemble* God, we are in a natural Tendency to Heaven, that perfect Element of Love, and when we go from hence ſhall conſort our ſelves with unſpeakable Joy and Alacrity with thoſe *great* and *bleſſed* Lovers that inhabit it. Who being all of them moſt amiable and Godlike Souls, that are every one of the ſame Temper with our ſelves, being touched at the ſame Loadſtone, and made partakers of the ſame Divine Nature, we ſhall immediately cloſe and joyn with them in the ſtricteſt Unions of Love. For thoſe Heavenly People being all of them moſt *flagrant* Lovers of God, are ſo united in him who is the common *Center* of Love, that no Saint or Angel can enjoy *his* Love without poſſeſſing a proportionate Degree

gree of *theirs*; and their Love of one another being all *ſubordinate* to their common Love to God, and *grounded* upon it; though their ſtrongeſt Inclination, like that of *excited* Needles, be ſtill towards *him* the bleſſed Magnet at which they have every one been touched, yet do they all *ſtick faſt* to one another, being *clung* inſeparably together by thoſe attractive Virtues which they have all derived from him. And in this ſtate of perfect *Friendſhip* they converſe together with unſpeakable Pleaſure, and all their Converſation is a perpetual Intercourſe of *wiſe* and *holy* Endearments. And now what a bleſſed Society muſt this be, wherein perfect *Love* and *Friendſhip* reigns, and hath an All-commanding Empire; where every Heart *mingles* with every one, and all like precious duſts of Gold, are melted together into one ſolid Ingot; where infinite Myriads of bleſſed Spirits, by interchangeably *claſping* and *twining* with one another, are ſo inſeparably *united* and *grown together* that they are all but one *compounded* Soul! And when from the higheſt Angel to the loweſt Saint they are all ſo *tied* together by the Heart-ſtrings that every one is every ones *dear* Friend, what inexpreſſible *Content* and *Complacency* muſt they needs take in one another! When I ſhall paſs all Heaven over through ten thouſand millions of bleſſed Beings, and meet none but ſuch as I moſt dearly *love*, and am as dearly *beloved* by. O! what unſpeakable Rejoycing and Congratulations will there be between us! eſpecially when I ſhall find no Defect either of Goodneſs or Happineſs in *them*, nor they in *me*, to damp our mutual Joy and Delight in each other; but every one ſhall be what every

every one wiſhes him, a *perfect* and a *bleſſed* Friend. For perfect Lovers have all their *Joys* and *Griefs* in common between them; but the Heavenly Lovers having no *Griefs* among them, do only communicate their *Joys* to one another. For where they love ſo perfectly as they do in Heaven, there can be no ſuch thing as a *private* or *particular* Happineſs, but every one muſt have a ſhare in every ones; and conſequently in this their mutual Communication of Bliſſes, every ones Happineſs will, by his Friendſhip to every one, be multiplied into as many Happineſſes as there are Saints and Angels in Heaven; and ſo every Joy of every Member of the Church Triumphant runs round the whole Body in an eternal *Circulation*. For that bleſſed Body being all compoſed of *conſenting* Hearts, that like perfect Uniſons are tuned up to the ſame Key, when any one is *touched*, every one *echoes* and *reſounds* the ſame Note; and whilſt they thus mutually *ſtrike* upon each other, and *all* are affected with *every ones* Joys, it is impoſſible but that in a State where there is nothing but Joy, there ſhould be a continual Conſort of *raviſhing* Harmony among them. For ſuch is their dear Concern for one another, that every ones Joy not only *pays to*, but *receives* Tribute from every ones; ſo that when any *one* bleſſed Spirit rejoyces, his Joy goes round the whole Society; and then all their rejoycings in his Joy *reflow* upon, and *ſwell* and *multiply* it; and ſo as they mutually *borrow* one anothers Joys, they always *pay* them back with Intereſt, and by thus *reciprocating* do everlaſtingly *increaſe* them.

II. As

II. As we are rational Creatures related to *one another*, we are obliged to be *juſt* and *righteous* in all our Intercourſes with each other. To yield to every one whatſoever by any Kind of Right, whether *natural* or *acquired*, he can demand or challenge of us. For there are ſome things to which every Man hath a Right by Nature as he is a Part or Member of Humane Society. As for inſtance, *Life*, which is the Principal of all our Actions and Perceptions, is freely lent us by God, who is the Source and Fountain of Life; and conſequently till God *reſumes* his Loan, or we *forfeit* it by our own Actions, we have all a natural Right to *live*, and for any man to attempt to deprive us of our Life, or of our Means of living, is the higheſt Injury and Injuſtice. Again, *Words* being inſtituted for no other End but to ſignifie our Meaning, and to be the Inſtrument of our Intercourſe and Society with one another, every one who is a Member of Humane Society hath a Right to have our Meaning *truly* ſignified to him by our Words, and whoſoever *lies* or *equivocates* to another, doth thereby injuriouſly deprive him of the natural Right of Society. Again, a *good Name* being the Ground of Truſt and Credit, and Credit the main Sinew of Society, till men have forfeited their good Name, they have a natural Right to be *well reputed* and *ſpoken* of; and whoſoever either by *falſe* Witneſs, *publick* ſlander, or *private* Whiſperings, endeavours to attaint an innocent Mans Reputation, doth thereby injuriouſly attempt to exclude him from the Converſation of Men, and ſhut the Door of Humane Society againſt him. Once more, *Promiſes* being the great

great Security of our mutual Intercourſe and Society with one another, every Man that hath a Right to Society hath a Right to what another *promiſeth* him, provided it be but *lawful* and *poſſible*; and therefore for any man to promiſe what he *intends* not to perform, or to *go back* from his Promiſe when he lawfully *may* and *can* perform it, is an Act of unjuſt Rapine; and I may every whit as honeſtly rob another Man of what is his *without* my Promiſe, as of what I have made his *by* it; he having an equal Right to *both* by the fundamental Laws of Society. In fine, the great Deſign of our Society being to *help* and *aſſiſt* one another, every Man has a Right to be *aided* and *aſſiſted* by every one with whom he hath any Dealing or Intercourſe; to have ſome ſhare of the Benefit of all that Exchange, Traffick, and Commerce which paſſes between him and others; and therefore for any man in his Dealings with others to take Advantage from their Neceſſity or Ignorance to *oppreſs* or *over-reach* them, or to deal ſo *hardly* by them as either not to allow them any ſhare of the Profit which accrues from their Dealings, or not a *ſufficient* ſhare for them to ſubſiſt and live by, is an injurious Invaſion of that natural Right which the very end and Deſign of Society gives them. But then beſides theſe *natural*, there are alſo *acquired* Rights; and ſuch are thoſe which either by *legal* Conſtitution, or by *mutual* Compacts and Agreements we are ſeized and veſted with; which *Conſtitutions* and *Compacts* being abſolutely neceſſary to the upholding and regulating of humane Societies, it is no leſs neceſſary that all thoſe Rights which they confer ſhould be

inviolably preſerved; and whoſoever knowingly or wilfully takes away or detains from another what he is thus entitled to by Law or agreement, is guilty either of a *Fraud* or a *Robbery*, either of which is an unjuſt Violation of the Rights of humane Society. So that the Practice of *Juſtice* and *Righteouſneſs*, as it is confined to humane Society, conſiſts in not intrenching either upon the *natural* or *acquired* Rights of thoſe with whom we have any Dealing or Intercourſe; in not endeavouring to deprive them either of their *Lives* or *Livelihoods*, unleſs by their own Actions they *forfeit* them to us; in imparting our *true* Meaning to them by our Words, and neither *hiding* it under *Lies* and *Falſhoods*, nor *diſguiſing* it with equivocal *Reſervations*; in making good to them all our lawful and poſſible *Promiſes*, in not falſely aſperſing their *good Names* and *Reputations*, nor ſuffering them to be *falſely aſperſed* when we are able to vindicate them; in neither uſing them *cruelly* in our Dealings, ſo as wilfully to damnifie them, nor *hardly* ſo as either to rake *all* the Advantage to our ſelves, or not to allow them ſuch a *competent* ſhare of it as is neceſſary to ſupport and maintain them: in a word, not to *defraud* or *rob* them of any thing which either by Conſtitution of *Law*, or by *Compact* and *Agreement* they have a Right to. This is *civil Righteouſneſs*, and without this it is impoſſible that any Society ſhould be *happy*. For how can any one be ſecure in a Society where *Violence* and *Rapine*, *Falſhood* and *Oppreſſion* reign; where Cauſes are decided, not by Rules of *Juſtice*, but by dint of *Power*, and the ſtrongeſt Arm is the ſole *Arbitrator* of *Right* and *Wrong*; where

where *Promiſes* and *Profeſſions* are only *Traps* and *Snares*, and every man lays *Ambuſhes* in his Words, and lurks behind them in *reſerved* Meanings, only to await an Opportunity to *ſurprize* and *ruine* every one he converſes with? It would doubtleſs be far more eligible for Men to *diſperſe* and *diſband* their Society and live *apart* as Vermin do, and ſubſiſt by *robbing* and *filching* from one another, than live together as they muſt in ſuch a State of injuſtice like Bundles of Briars and Thorns, and out of their mutual Jealouſies and Diſtruſts be continually *tearing* and *ſcratching* one another.

Now, as I ſhewed you before, what Mens Tempers are *here*, ſuch will their Company be *hereafter*. So that if we go out of *this* World with an *unrighteous* Temper, we muſt expect to be confined in the *other* to an *unrighteous* Society; and if Unrighteouſneſs be ſuch a *Nuiſance* to our Society in this Life, what a *Plague* will it be to it in the Life to come? For the moſt *barbarous* Societies of Men in this Life, have ſome *Remains* of Juſtice and Equity among them; and though the *beſt* of them have many corrupt Members that are bad in the *main*, yet whether it be by their natural Temper, or their Fear of Puniſhment or Diſgrace, or by their Senſe of Honour, or Checks of Conſcience, they are frequently reſtrained from *many* bad things, and particularly from *Diſhoneſty* and *Injuſtice*; by which means their Society is rendred much more tolerable. But in the other Life, as they are all *perfectly* good that are in the Society of the good, ſo they are all *perfectly* wicked that are in the Society of the wicked; and whatſoever Checks there may

be in their Natures to any *particular* Acts of Wickedneſs, they are there *all* born down by their inveterate Malice againſt God, and outragious Deſpair of ever being reconciled to him. So that in all their Society with one another there is not the leaſt Intermixture of *juſt* and *righteous* Intercourſe, but all their Converſation is *Falſhood* and *Treachery*, *Violence* and *Oppreſſion*, and whatſoever elſe is *hurtful* and *injurious* to one another. For the Devil, who is the ſoveraign Prince of their Society, is deſcribed in Scripture to be the *Father of Lies*, and a *Murtherer from the beginning*, that is, a moſt outrageouſly unjuſt and unrighteous Being, one whoſe whole Trade hath been to cheat and deceive, to rook men of their Happineſs, and maſk his murtherous Intentions againſt them with diſſembled Smiles, and fawning Endearments. And doubtleſs *Regis ad exemplum* is true *there* as well as *here*; the miſerable Vaſſals of his dark Kingdom do all imitate his Manners, and tread in his Footſteps. And if ſo, O! good Lord, what *woful* Society muſt they have with one another! When by reaſon of their continual Experience of each others *Falſhood* and *Inſincerity*, all mutual *Truſt* and *Confidence* is baniſhed from among them, and every one is forced to ſtand upon his own Guard in continual Expectance of *Miſchief* from every one. When all their Life is a Trade of *Diabolical* Knaveries, and their whole Study is to *do* and *retaliate* Injuries, and the main Buſineſs of this their helliſh Society is to *circumvent* and *play the Devils* with one another. Doubtleſs *this alone* is enough to make Hell a moſt dreadful State, though there were *nothing elſe* dreadful in it; and

and I verily believe, if it were left to my own Option, I ſhould much rather chuſe to languiſh out an Eternity in ſome diſmal Dungeon *alone*, and there converſe only with my own ſilent Griefs, than to dwell for ever in the Garden of the World accompanied with ſuch *falſe* and *villanous* Creatures.

That this therefore may not be our Fate *hereafter*, it is a great Part of the Buſineſs of our Holy Religion to train us up for better Company, by inuring us *beforehand* to the practice of *Righteouſneſs* and *Juſtice*. For ſo it obliges us *to do unto men whatſoever we would that men ſhould do unto us*, Mark vii. 12. that is, ſo to deal with every man as if we had exchanged perſons with him, and he were in *our* place, and we in *his*. And in particular it enjoyns us to be *harmleſs as Doves as well as wiſe as Serpents*, Matt. x. 16. *to converſe in the World with ſimplicity and godly ſincerity*, 2 Cor. i. 12. *to keep up an honeſt converſation in the world*, 1 Pet. ii. 12. *not to lie to one another*, Col. iii. 9. *not to go beyond or defraud our brother in any matter*, 1 Theſ. iv. 6. The ſenſe of all which is, to oblige us to maintain a ſtrict *Integrity* in all our Profeſſions and Intercourſes with men, and not to allow our ſelves in any Courſe of Action which the Laws of *Juſtice* and *Sincerity* diſapprove; to meaſure our *Words* by our *Meaning*, and our *Meaning* ſo far as we are able, by the *Truth* and *Reality* of things; to converſe among men with a generous *Openneſs* and *Freedom*, and with as little *Reſerve* and *Diſguiſe* as is poſſible and prudent, conſidering what a *treacherous* and *ill-natured* World we have to deal with; to *be* what we *ſeem*, and not to paint ill Meanings

with ſmiling Looks and ſmooth Pretences; to *notifie* our Intentions, and *unfold* our Hearts, and, ſo far as innocent Prudence will admit, to turn our ſelves *inſide outwards* to all we converſe with; to give to every one his due, and not to intrench upon other mens Rights, whether it be to their *Lives* or *Liberties*, *Reputations* or *Eſtates:* In a word, to weigh to our Neighbours and our ſelves in the ſame Balance, and to do to *them* whatſoever we could reaſonably wiſh they ſhould do to *us*, if *we* were in *their* Perſons and Circumſtances. By the Practice of which excellent Rules our Mind will by degrees be refined and purified from all Diſpoſition to *Fraud* and *Injuſtice*; and then when we go from hence into Eternity we ſhall carry thither with us ſuch a *juſt* and *righteous* Frame of Mind, ſuch an honeſt *Plainneſs* and *Integrity* of Temper as will immediately qualifie and diſpoſe us for the Society of *juſt men made perfect*, who finding us already united to them in *Diſpoſition* and *Nature*, will joyfully receive us into their bleſſed Communion. And now, O! the bleſſed State we ſhall be in, when being ſtripped of all *Partiality* and *unjuſt Deſire*, of all *Inſincerity* and *Craftineſs* of Temper, we ſhall be admitted into a Nation of *juſt* and *righteous* People, where every one has his appropriate Seat and Manſion of Glory, and is ſo perfectly *contented* with it that he never *covets* what another enjoys, ſo that every one poſſeſſes what is his own without the leaſt ſuſpicion of being ejected by a *ſubtiller* or more *powerful* Neighbour; where being perfectly aſſured of each others *Integrity*, they converſe together with the greateſt Openneſs and Freedom,

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and in all their Language, whatſoever it be, do *read* their Hearts and *convey* their Intentions to one another; where their Souls converſe *face to face*, and do freely *unboſom* themſelves to one another without the leaſt *Diſguiſe* or *Diſſimulation*; ſo that in all their Society there is no ſuch thing as a *Secret* or *Myſtery*, but they are all Boſom Friends to one another, and every one has a Window into every ones Breaſt! O! bleſſed God what a moſt *happy* Converſation muſt ſuch juſt Souls as theſe enjoy with one another, from whoſe Society all Fraud and Falſhood, violence and Oppreſſion is for ever baniſhed! For whilſt they live together as they do in the continual Exerciſe of perfect *Righteouſneſs* and *Integrity*, they can neither deſign upon, nor ſuſpect one another, and ſo conſequently muſt needs converſe together with infinite Security and Freedom. And being all of them thus inviolably ſafe in each others *Sincerity* and *Juſtice*; every one enjoys his proper Rank and Degree of Glory without Fear or Diſturbance, and freely communicates his *wiſe* and *excellent* Thoughts to every one without any Strangeneſs or Reſerve. Thus all Heaven over there is a moſt perfect *Freedom* of Converſation among thoſe *righteous* People that inhabit it, and every one is every ones *Neighbour*, and every ones Neighbour is as *Himſelf*. For in all their Communication and Intercourſe they mutually *exchange* Perſons with one another, and there is no one *doth* that to another which he would not gladly have *done* to himſelf in the ſame Condition and Circumſtances. So that none of them all can poſſibly be aggrieved becauſe they *are* every

one dealt by just as they *would be*, most *fairly*, most *righteously* and *faithfully*. And hence there can be no *Grudges* among them, no *Whisperings*, *Backbitings* or spightful *Misrepresentations*, because every one likes what every one does, and so they are all perfectly satisfied with one another. And thus you see in the Exercise of perfect *Righteousness* and *Integrity* all the Society of Heaven is rendred perfectly *happy*.

III. As we are rational Creatures related to *one another* we are obliged to behave our selves *peaceably* in our respective States and Relations. For Society being nothing but an united Multitude, it is indispensably necessary to the preservation of its Union, that every Individual Member of it should *peaceably* comport himself towards every one in that Degree and Order wherein he is placed. Because, as the Health of *natural* Bodies depends upon the Harmony and Agreement of their Parts, so doth the Prosperity of Societies or *political* ones. For 'tis *Peace* and mutual *Accord* which is the Soul that doth both animate and unite Society, and keep the Parts of it from dispersing and flying abroad into Atoms, which nothing but Force and Violence can hinder them from, when once they are broken into Discords and dissentions. So true is that of our Saviour, *A Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand.* For besides that Division impairs the strength of a Society, which like an impetuous Stream being parted into several Currents runs with far less force, and is much more easily forded; for the several Factions that are in it are like the several Nations in a Confederate Army, which though they

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be all united into one Body have ſeveral contrary Intereſts and Deſigns, which divides their Councils, and ſows Jealouſies among them, and ſo renders them not only leſs *able* to withſtand the Force of an unanimous Enemy, but alſo leſs *willing* to aid and aſſiſt one another; beſides this, I ſay, Faction and Diſcord naturally diſunites and ſeparates Society, as it diſſolves the Bond of Peace which holds it together. For a Society without Peace is but an aggregated Body whoſe Parts lie together in a confuſed heap, but have no Joynts or Sinews to faſten them to one another; for want of which inſtead of mutually aſſiſting they do but mutually load and oppreſs each other; which muſt neceſſarily divide their *Wills* and their *Intereſts*, and when that is done 'tis only external Force that hinders them from dividing and ſeparating their *Perſons*. Upon this account therefore every man is obliged, as he is a Member of Humane Society, to comport himſelf *peaceably* with all men; becauſe otherwiſe he will neceſſarily render himſelf a publick Peſt and Nuiſance. For ſo long as he is of an *unquiet* and *turbulent* Spirit, inſtead of being an *Help* he muſt neceſſarily be a *Diſeaſe* to every Community of which he is a Member; and if thoſe with whom he is joyned were all of his Humour and Spirit, it would be much better for them all to live aſunder in the moſt ſolitary Condition, than to continue in Society together; becauſe inſtead of *helping* and *aſſiſting* they would be ſure to be continually *vexing* and *plaguing* one another.

If therefore we go into the other World with an *unquiet* and *quarrelſom* Temper, we ſhall be thereby

thereby inclined to and prepared for the moſt wretched and miſerable Society, even the Society of thoſe *factious* Fiends that could not be quiet even in Heaven it ſelf, but raiſed a Mutiny before the Throne of God, and for ſo doing were driven thence, and damned to keep one another Company in endleſs Miſery and Deſpair. The Souls of men therefore being by the Laws of the Inviſible State always aſſigned to that Society of Spirits whereunto they are moſt connaturalized in their Temper, we muſt expect, if we go into Eternity with *turbulent* and *contentious* Minds, to be thruſt into the Society of Devils and damned Ghoſts, with whom we are already joyned in a ſtrict Communion of Natures. And O! what a *dreadful* thing muſt it be, to be forced to ſpend an Eternity in ſuch *Wretched* Company! Verily methinks the moſt horrid and frightful Idea I can form in my own Mind, is, that of a company of *ſnarling* and *quarrelſom* Spirits, crouded like ſo many Scorpions and Adders into a Den together, and there forced by the Venomouſneſs of their Temper to live in continual Mutiny, and be perpetually *hiſſing* and *ſpitting* Poiſon at one another. For though thoſe words of our Saviour, *Matt.* xii. 25, 26. imply that Satans Kingdom is *not* divided, yet they are not to be ſo underſtood as if there were any ſuch thing as *Peace* or *Concord* among thoſe rancorous Spirits, for that is impoſſible to be imagined; no, doubtleſs they *would* be divided eternally if they *could*, being ſuch continual plagues as they are to one another, and think it a mighty Happineſs to be ſhut up all *alone* in ſeparate Dens, where they might never *ſee* nor *hear* of one another more;

more; but being chained together as they are by an Adamantine Fate, which they cannot withſtand, they conſent in *this*, and in this *only*, to oppoſe all good Deſigns, and do the utmoſt Miſchief they are able. But as to all their other Intercourſes they are continually embroiled, and do live in an eternal Variance with one another. So that their Society is like that Monſter *Scylla*, whom the Poets talk of, whoſe inferiour parts were a company of Dogs that were perpetually ſnarling and quarrelling among themſelves, and yet were inſeparable from one another as being all of them parts of the ſame ſubſtance.

Wherefore ſince to be united by indiſſoluble Ligaments to this wretched Society will be the certain Fate of all *factious* and *contentious* Souls, our bleſſed Religion, whoſe great Deſign is to advance our happineſs, hath taken abundant care to educate our Minds in *Quietneſs* and *Peace*. For hither tend all thoſe Precepts of it which require us to *follow peace with all men*, Heb. xii. 14. *to be at peace among our ſelves*, 1 Theſſ. v. 13. *to follow after the things that make for peace*, Rom. xiv. 19. *to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, Epheſ. iv. 3. *to be of one mind and to live in peace*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. *and if it be poſſible, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all men*, Rom. xii. 18. In a word, *to mark them that cauſe diviſions among us, and avoid them*, Rom. xvi. 17. and to do our part *that there be no diviſions among us, but that we be perfectly joyned together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment*, 1 Cor. i. 10. The Deſign of all which is to bind us over to the Study and Practice of *Unity* and *Concord*, and reſtrain us by

by the ſtricteſt Obligations from all *ſchiſmatical factious*, and *turbulent* Behaviour in thoſe ſacred or civil Societies whereof we are Members. And unleſs we do ſincerely endeavour to fulfil theſe Obligations, however we may *monopolize* Godlineſs to our own Party, and *claw* and *canonize* one another, we are Saints of a quite different ſtrain from thoſe bleſſed ones above, and are acted by the *factious* Spirit of the Devil, whoſe Buſineſs it is to foment Diviſions, and kindle Diſturbances and Commotions where-ever he comes. This therefore muſt be our great Care, if we deſign for Heaven, to root out of our Tempers all Inclination to *Contention* and *Diſcord*, and to compoſe our ſelves into a *ſedate* and *peaceable*, *calm* and *gentle* frame of Spirit; and not only to avoid all unneceſſary Quarrels and Contentions *our ſelves*, but ſo far as in us lies to be Peace-makers between *others*, and preſerve a friendly Union *with* and *among* our fellow members. And if through humane *Frailty* and *Infirmity*, through our own *Ignorance* or the plauſible *Pretences* of Seducers, through the too great Prevalence of our Worldly *Intereſt* or the Principles of a bad *Education*, it ſhould be our Misfortune to be inſenſibly *miſled* into unwarrantable Diſſents and Diviſions, yet ſtill to keep our Minds in a *teachable* temper, and our Ears open to *Truth* and *Conviction*; to be deſirous of *Accommodation*, and willing to hear the Reaſons on *both ſides*, and as ſoon as we are *convinced* of our Error, to *repent* of our Diviſion and immediately return to *Unity* and *Peace*.

Which if it be our conſtant Practice and Endeavour, we ſhall by Degrees form our Minds into

into ſuch a *peaceable* and *amicable* Temper, that when we go into the other World where we ſhall be perfectly diſengaged from all temporal Intereſts, and throughly convinced of all our erroneous Prejudice, our Souls will be effectually contempered to the *quiet* and *peaceable* Society of the Bleſſed; who having no private Intereſts to purſue, no particular Affections to gratifie, no Ends or Aims but what are common to them all, which is to *adore*, and *imitate*, and *love* that never-failing Spring whence all their Felicity flows, it is impoſſible there ſhould be any Occaſion adminiſtred by any of them of any Schiſm or rupture of Communion. And ſo thoſe happy People live in the moſt perfect Unity and Concord, as being all united in their ends, and tied together by their heart-ſtrings. For they having no counter Opinions or croſs Intereſts to divide them, nothing but Truth *ſhining* in their Minds, nothing but Goodneſs *reigning* in their Wills, it is impoſſible there ſhould be any *diſſenting Brother* among them, any *Non-conformiſt* to the bleſſed Laws of their Communion; but conſpiring together as they do in the ſame Mind and Intereſt, and in the ſame peaceable Intentions and Affections, they muſt needs walk hand in hand together in a moſt perfect *Uniformity*. So that if we would live for *ever* with theſe bleſſed Folk, we muſt *now* endeavour to *calm* and *compoſe* our ſelves into their Temper; to diſcharge our Minds, as much as we are able, of every *froward* and *contentious* Humour, and reduce our Wills to a perfect loathing of them; that ſo being *qualified* for their Society we may be *admitted* to it when we go away from this *wrangling*

ling World. And then how unſpeakably happy ſhall we be, when with Minds perfectly refined from all Contention and Bitterneſs we ſhall be received into the Company of thoſe *calm* and *ſedate* Spirits, and bear our part in their *ſweet* and *placid* Converſation, wherein they freely communicate their minds to one another without the leaſt *Fierceneſs* or *Inſolence*, *Captiouſneſs* or *Miſconſtruction*, *Clamour* or *Contention for Victory*, and do eternally diſcourſe over the *wiſe* things of Heaven, and ſtill perfectly concenter both in their *Underſtandings* and *Wills*; wherein like ſo many Stars in Conjunction they mingle Light with one another, and do peaceably communicate the treaſures of their Knowledge without the leaſt bandying or Controverſie. For though *ſome* of them do doubtleſs know much more than others, yet there being no Intermixture of Error in the Knowledge of *any*, it is impoſſible they ſhould *oppoſe* or *contradict* one another, becauſe whatſoever is true, agrees with every thing that is true. And being thus united in Mind and Judgment, they freely communicate their thoughts without ever diſputing one anothers Sentences, which renders it impoſſible for them ever to *quarrel* or *diſagree*. So that all their Communion is a perfect *Concord* of Souls; wherein there is no ſuch thing as a *Schiſm* or *Diviſion*, as paſſing *cruel* Cenſures or affixing *hard* Names or bandying *Anathema*'s at one another, but in Mind & Heart they are all as perfectly *one* as if they were all animated by one and the ſame Soul. And thus they live unſpeakably happy in the mutual exerciſe of an everlaſting *Peace*, and all their Converſation with one another is perfect *Harmony* without *Diſcords*.

IV. As

IV. As we are rational Creatures related to *one another*, we are obliged *modeſtly* to ſubmit to our *Superiours*, and chearfully to *condeſcend* to our *Inferiours* in thoſe reſpective Societies whereof we are Members. Theſe two I put together, becauſe they are Relatives, and as ſuch do mutually explain and contribute light to each other. Now it being neceſſary to the Order and End of all Societies that their Members ſhould be diſtinguiſhed into *ſuperiour* and *inferiour* Ranks and Stations; that ſome ſhould be truſted with the power of *Commanding*, and others reduced to the condition of *Obedience*, that ſo in this regular Subordination they may every one in their ſeveral ſtations be obliged to *aid* and *aſſiſt* each other, and according to their ſeveral Capacities to contribute to the good of the *Whole*; which in a ſtate of Equality (wherein every Man would be abſolute Lord of himſelf) cannot be expected, conſidering the different Humours and Intereſts by which Men are acted; this, I ſay, being upon this account neceſſary, it is upon the ſame account equally neceſſary that they ſhould mutually perform thoſe Offices to one another, which are proper to their reſpective Ranks and Stations. That Superiours ſhould look upon themſelves as *Truſtees* for the Publick Good, whom God hath inveſted with Authority over others not to *domineer* and gratifie their own *imperious* Wills, but to *provide* for and *ſecure* the Common-weal; and conſequently to take care that they do not proſtitute their *Power* to their own private *Avarice* or *Ambition*, but that they employ it for the Common Good and Benefit of their Subjects and Inferiours; that they be ready to

to do them all good Offices, to compaſſionate their *Infirmities*, conſult their *Conveniencies*, and comply with all their reaſonable *Supplications*; conſidering that for this End they derived their Authority from God who is the Fountain of Authority, to whom they are accountable for their good and bad Adminiſtration of it. And ſo for the Inferiours, it is no leſs neceſſary for the Common Good, that they perform their parts towards thoſe that are above them; that they behave themſelves towards them, with all that *Loyalty* and *Modeſty*, *Reſpect* and *Submiſſion* which their Place and Authority calls for; that they reverence them as the *Vicegerents* of God, and addreſs to them as to *ſacred* Perſons, and render a chearful Obedience to that divine Authority that is ſtampt upon all their *juſt* Laws and Commands; conſidering that in their ſeveral Degrees, they repreſent the Perſon of the great Soveraign of the World, to whom we owe an intire Subjection, and conſequently are in every thing to be *obeyed* and *ſubmitted* to, that he hath not expreſly *countermanded*. For that Subjects and Superiours ſhould thus behave themſelves towards one another, is indiſpenſably neceſſary to the Welfare of all Societies. For whilſt the Inferiours of any Society do obſtinately refuſe to ſubmit to the Will of their Superiours, and the Superiours to condeſcend to the Common Good of their Inferiours, they are contending together, either for a *Confuſion* or a *Tyranny*; and if the Superiours prevail, Tyranny follows; if the Inferiours, Confuſion: either of which is extremely miſchievous, not only to the Society in general, but to each of the contending Parties.

For

For if *Confuſion* follows, 'tis not only the Superiour Party ſuffers by being *depoſed* from his Authority, but the Inferiour too by being *deprived* of Protection, and expoſed to one anothers *Rapine* and *Violence*; and if *Tyranny* follows, 'tis not only the Inferiour Party ſuffers by being forced upon a *rigorous* and *uneaſie* Obedience, but the Superiour too, by being continually perplexed how to *force* and *extort* that Obedience; and thus both Parties ſuffer under the bad effects of each others Miſdemeanour. So that to make our Society happy, it is neceſſary, that whether we be Superiours or Inferiours, we ſhould be of a *gentle*, *yielding* and *treatable* Temper, that ſo, which Rank ſoever we are placed in, we may be *pliable* either way, to a *fair* Condeſcenſion, or a *juſt* Submiſſion. For whilſt we are of *obſtinate*, *perverſe*, and *untractable* Tempers, we are neither fit to be Superiours nor Inferiours, but muſt neceſſarily be Plagues and Grievances to our Society, which Rank or Order ſoever we are placed in. And though in this life we have not always ſuch a ſenſible Experience of the Evil and Miſchief of this *malignant* Temper, becauſe now it is counter-influenced by thoſe more *meek* and *auſpicious* ones that are in Conjunction with it; yet when we go into Eternity, we ſhall be conſigned to ſuch a Society of Spirits as are all *throughout* of our own Genius and Temper. For as in the Society of the Bleſſed there is a Conjunction of every *Vertue* in every Member; ſo there is of every *Vice* in the Society of the Wicked; who do not only retain thoſe Vices in their Natures, which they were here inclined and addicted to, but are alſo con-

tinually excited to all other Vices they are capable of, by their inveterate Enmity againſt God, which in that miſerable eſtate is perpetually enraged, by their Deſpair of being ever reconciled to him. So that whatſoever wicked Temper we carry with us into Eternity, we ſhall be ſure to meet with it in every individual Member of the Society of the Wicked, and conſequently if we carry thither with us a *perverſe* and *untreatable* Temper that will not endure either to *ſubmit* or *condeſcend*, we ſhall be ſure to find the ſame Humour reigning throughout all the Society of the Wicked. And then being eternally united to it, (as we muſt expect to be if we are allied to it by Nature) in what a miſerable ſtate ſhall we be, when every Member of our Society ſhall be of the ſame *unconverſable* Temper with our ſelves, and we ſhall find none that will *comply with*, or endeavour to *ſooth* and *mollifie* our Obſtinacy; when all our whole Society ſhall conſiſt of a Company of *ſtiff* and *ſtubborn* Spirits that will neither *ſubmit to*, nor *bear with* one another, but every one will have his will upon every one, ſo far as he is able to force and extort it; when thoſe that are ſuperiour in Might and Power, do all rule with a *fierce* and *tyrannical* Will, and will *condeſcend* to nothing that is beneficial for their Subjects; and thoſe that are inferiour do obey with a *perverſe* and *ſtubborn* Heart, and will *ſubmit* to nothing but what they are *forced* and *compelled* to, and 'tis nothing but meer Power and Dread by which they *rule* and are *ruled*: In a word, when they all mutually *hate* and *abominate* each other, and thoſe that *command* are a company of *cruel* and *imperious* Devils

Devils that impoſe nothing but Grievances and Plagues, and thoſe that *obey* are a Company of *ſurly* and *untractable* Slaves, that ſubmit to nothing but what they are *driven to* by Plagues; ſo that *Plagues* and *Grievances*, are both the Matter and the Motive of all their Obedience and Subjection; when this, I ſay, is the State of their Society with one another, how is it poſſible but that they ſhould be all of them in a moſt *wretched* and *miſerable* Condition? For where all is tranſacted by *Force* and *Compulſion* (as to be ſure all is among ſuch a Company of *perverſe* and *ſelf-willed* Spirits) there every one muſt be ſuppoſed to be, ſo far as he is able, a Fury and a Devil to every one; and thoſe that *do compel* are like ſo many ſalvage Tyrants continually vexed and enraged with *ſtubborn* Oppoſitions and Reſiſtances, and thoſe that *are compelled* like ſo many obſtinate Gally-Slaves are continually *laſhed* into an unſufferable obedience, and forced by *one* Torment to ſubmit to *another*; and thus all their Society with one another is a perpetual Intercourſe of mutual *Outrage* and *Violence*.

This being therefore the miſerable Fate and Iſſue of a *perverſe* and *ſtubborn* and *untractable* Temper, the Goſpel, whoſe great deſign is to direct us to our Happineſs, doth induſtriouſly endeavour to root it out of our Minds, and to plant in its room a *gentle*, *obſequious* and *condeſcending* Diſpoſition. For hither tend all thoſe Evangelical Precepts which require us *to become weak to the weak that we may gain them*, 1 Cor. ix. 22. *to bear with their infirmities*, Rom. xv. 1. *and ſupport them, and be patient towards them*, 1 Theſſ. v. 14. And

on the other hand, *to ſubmit our ſelves to our Elders*, 1 Pet. v. 5. *and to thoſe that have the rule over us*, Heb. xiii. 17. *to obey our Magiſtrates, our Parents, and our Maſters, to be ſubject to Principalities, and not ſpeak evil of Dignities, to honour Kings, and ſubmit to their Laws, and Governours*, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. In a word, *to honour all men as they deſerve*, 1 Pet. ii. 17. *and to hold good men in Reputation*, Phil. ii. 19. *and in honour to prefer one another*, Rom. xii. 10. The ſenſe of all which is, to oblige us to treat all men as becomes us, in the Rank and Station we are placed in; to *honour* thoſe that are our *Superiours* whether in Place or Virtue, to give that modeſt Deference to their Judgments, that Reverence to their Perſons, that Reſpect to their Virtues, and Homage to their Deſires or Commands, which the Degree or Kind of their Superiority requires; to *condeſcend* to thoſe that are our *Inferiours*, and treat them with all that Candour and Ingenuity, Sweetneſs and Affability, that the reſpective Diſtances of our State will allow; to conſult their Conveniences, and do them all good Offices, and pity and bear with their Infirmities, ſo far as they are *ſafely* and *wiſely* tolerable. By the conſtant Practice of which, our minds will be gradually cured of all that *Perverſeneſs* and *ſurlineſs* of Temper, which indiſpoſes us to the reſpective Duties of our Relations; of all that *Contempt* and *Selfiſhneſs* which renders us averſe to the proper Duty of Superiours, and of all that *Self-Conceit* and *Impatience of Command* which indiſpoſes us to the duty of Inferiours. And our Wills being once wrought into an eaſie *pliableneſs* either to *Submiſſion* or *Condeſcenſion*, we are in a forward Prepara-

Preparation of Mind to live under the Government of Heaven, where doubtleſs under God the ſupreme Lord and Sovereign, there are numberleſs Degrees of Superiority and Inferiority. For ſome are ſaid to reap *ſparingly* and ſome *abundantly*, ſome to be Rulers of *five* Cities, and ſome of *ten*, ſome to be the *leaſt*, and ſome the *greateſt* in the Kingdom of Heaven; all which implies, that in that bleſſed State, there is a great Variety of Degrees of Glory and Advancement. And indeed it cannot be otherwiſe in the Nature of the thing; for our Happineſs conſiſting in the Perfection of our Natures, the more or leſs *perfect* we are, the more or leſs *happy* we muſt neceſſarily be; for every farther Degree of Goodneſs we attain to, is a *widening* and *enlargement* of our Souls for farther Degrees of Glory and Beatitude. And accordingly when we arrive at Heaven, which is the Element of Beatitude, we ſhall all be filled according to the *Content* and *Meaſure* of our Capacities, and drink in more or leſs of its Rivers of Pleaſure, as we are more or leſs *enlarged* to contain them. So that according as we do more and more improve our ſelves in true Goodneſs, we do naturally make more and more Room in our Souls for Heaven, which doth always fill the Veſſels of Glory of all ſizes, and pour in happineſs upon them till they all overflow and can contain no more. Since therefore they are all of them entirely reſigned to, and guided by right Reaſon, there is no doubt but in theſe their different Degrees of Glory and Dignity, they mutually behave themſelves towards one another, as is moſt *fit* and *becoming*, and that ſince under God the

Head and King of their Society, there is from the higheſt to the loweſt a moſt exact and regular Subordination of Members, they do every one perform their Parts and Duties towards every one, in all thoſe different Stations of Glory they are placed in, and conſequently do *ſubmit* and *condeſcend* to each other, according as they are of a *ſuperiour* or *inferiour* Claſs and Order. So that if when we go from hence into the other world, we carry a long with us a *ſubmiſſive* and *condeſcending* Frame of Spirit, we ſhall be trained up, and prediſpoſed to live under the bleſſed *Hierarchy* of Heaven; to yield a chearful Conformity to the Laws and Cuſtoms of it; and to render all the Honours to thoſe *above*, and all the Condeſcenſions to thoſe *beneath* us in Glory, which the Statutes of that Heavenly Regiment do require; in doing whereof we ſhall all of us enjoy a moſt unſpeakable Content, and Felicity. For though in the Kingdom of Heaven, as well as the Kingdoms of the Earth, there are numberleſs Degrees of Advancement, and Dignity, and one Star *there*, as well as *here*, differeth from another Star in Glory; yet ſo *freely*, and *chearfully* do they all *condeſcend* and *ſubmit* to each other, in theſe their reſpective differences of Rank and Station, that in the wideſt Diſtances of their State, and Degrees of Glory, they all maintain the deareſt *Intimacies* and *Familiarities* with each other; and neither thoſe that are Superiour are either *envied* for their Height, or *contemned* for their Familiarity; nor thoſe that are Inferiour *deſpiſed* for their Meanneſs, or *oppreſſed* for their Weakneſs. For in that bleſſed State, every one being beſt *pleaſed* with what

what beſt becomes him, it is every ones *Joy* to behave himſelf towards every one as beſt becomes the Rank and Degree he is placed in; and thoſe that are *above*, do *glory* in condeſcending to thoſe that are *below* them, and thoſe that are *below*, do *triumph* in ſubmitting to thoſe that are *above* them; and thus in all thoſe Differences of Glory and Dignity between them, they alternately *reverence* their Superiours, and *condeſcend* to their Inferiours, with the ſame *unforced* Freedom and Alacrity, and ſo do eternally converſe with one another (notwithſtanding all their Diſtances) with the greateſt *Freedom*, and moſt endearing *Familiarity*.

And thus I have endeavoured to give you an account of the firſt ſort of *Means*, by which *Heaven* the great *End* of a *Chriſtian* is to be obtained; *viz.* the *proximate* and *immediate* ones, which comprehend the Practice of all thoſe Virtues, which as *Rational Creatures* related to *God* and *one another* we ſtand eternally obliged to; and ſhewed how they are all of them eſſential Parts of the *Chriſtian Life*, and how *Heaven* it ſelf conſiſts in the *Perfection* of them.

So that upon the whole, the beſt Definition I can give of the State of Heaven is this, That it is the *everlaſting*, *perfect* Exerciſe of all thoſe *Humane*, *Divine* and *Social* Virtues, which as *Rational Animals*, related to *God*, and all his *Rational Creation*, we are *indiſpenſably* and *everlaſtingly* obliged to. And therefore ſince the only natural way, by which we can *acquire* and *perfect* theſe Vertues is *Uſe* and *Practice*, it hence neceſſarily follows, that the *Practice* of them is the only *direct*

and *immediate* Means, by which that *Heavenly State* is to be purchaſed and obtained.

SECT. IV.

Wherein for a Concluſion of this Chapter ſome Motives *and* Conſiderations *are propoſed to perſwade men to the Practice of theſe* Heavenly Virtues.

It having been largely ſhewn in the foregoing Sections, that the Practice of all thoſe Virtues which are included in the *Heavenly* Part of the *Chriſtian Life* tends directly towards the heavenly State, and naturally grows up into it; I ſhall now briefly conclude this Argument with ſome *Motives* to perſuade men to the Practice of them. And theſe I ſhall deduce,

1. From the *Suitableneſs* of them to our preſent *State* and *Relation.*
2. From the *Dignity.*
3. From the *Freedom.*
4. From the *Pleaſure.*
5. From the *Eaſe*, and
6. And laſtly, from the *Neceſſity* of them.

I. Therefore let us conſider the *Suitableneſs* of theſe Virtues to our preſent *State* and *Relation.* For in our Baptiſm, wherein we gave up our Names to Chriſt, we become *Denizons* and *Freemen* of Heaven, and were received into a Covenant that upon Performance of our Part of it actually intituled us to all its bleſſed *Priviledges* and *Immunities.* So that in that ſacred Solemnity of our Initiation into the Chriſtian Covenant, we contracted a ſtrict Alliance with the bleſſed Peo-

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ple of Heaven, and became their *Brethren* and *Fellow-Citizens*. For ſo the Apoſtle tells us, *Epheſ.* ii. 19. *Now therefore ye are no more ſtrangers and foreiners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the houſhold of God*; and *the houſhold of God* conſiſts of the whole Congregation of the Saints, whether *militant* upon Earth, or *triumphant* in Heaven. For ſo, *Eph.* iii. 15. it is called *the whole family of heaven and earth.* So that we are Confederates with them in the ſame Covenant, even that by which they hold all the Joys and Glories they are poſſeſſed of; and if we will do as they have done, that is, perform the Conditions of it, we ſhall be Co-habitants with them in the ſame Glory. We are adopted Children of the ſame Father with them, Members of the ſame Family, Co-heirs of the Promiſe of the ſame Glory, Brethren of the ſame Confraternity and Corporation; and all the difference between *them* and *us* is only this, that we are *abroad*, and they *at home*; we are on *this*, and they on *t'other* ſide *Jordan*; we in the *Acqueſt*, and they in the *Poſſeſſion* of the heavenly *Canaan*; to which we are intitled as well as they, and that by the ſame Grant from the ſupreme Proprietor. So that by calling our ſelves *Chriſtians*, we do in other words call our ſelves *Brethren*, *Co-heirs*, and *Fellow-Citizens* with the bleſſed Inhabitants of Heaven. And what can be more *ſuitable* to ſuch a Profeſſion, than for us to live as they do, in the continued Practice of all theſe *heavenly Virtues?* And what a ſhame will it be for us, that are by Profeſſion their Brethren, not to *copy* and *imitate* their Behaviour; that we who are below Stairs in the ſame

Houſe

Houſe and Family ſhould abandon our ſelves to *Senſuality* and *Deviliſhneſs*, whilſt our bleſſed Kindred above are entertaining themſelves with thoſe heavenly Pleaſures which reſult from the perfect Exerciſe of all *heavenly Virtue*; that we ſhould be *neglecting*, *provoking*, and *blaſpheming* God, whilſt they are *contemplating* and *admiring*, *loving* and *praiſing*, *imitating* and *obeying* him; that we ſhould by *cheating* and *defrauding*, *envying* and *deſpiſing*, *maligning* and *embroiling* one another, whilſt they are converſing together with the greateſt *Freedom* and *Integrity*, with the moſt obliging *Reſpects* and *Condeſcenſions*, and in the ſtricteſt *Unity* and deareſt *Friendſhip?* What a vile Reproach are our wicked lives to the Converſation of theſe our *Fellow-Citizens* above? for while we profeſs our ſelves their *Brethren*, thoſe who underſtand no better will be prone to ſuſpect that *they* live as *we* do, and how would ſuch a Suſpicion tempt an honeſt Heathen to renounce Heaven, as the *Indian* King did, when he was told that the bloudy *Spaniards* went thither; and rather chuſe to go down to the darkeſt Hell than to a Heaven that is peopled with ſuch *Diabolical* Company? So that by our *wicked* and *un-ſaint-like* Lives, we take an effectual Courſe to bring Heaven it ſelf into Diſgrace, and to caſt ſuch a Slander on its bleſſed Inhabitants, as may juſtly expoſe them to the Scorn and Hatred of all thoſe honeſt Minds that know them no otherwiſe than by us their *unworthy* and *degenerate* Fellow-Citizens; and could thoſe bleſſed Spirits look down from their Thrones of Bliſs, and ſee what a Company of *wretched* Chriſtians there are that claim *Kindred* with them, they would doubtleſs

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be aſhamed of the *Relation*, and count themſelves highly diſhonoured and diſgraced by it, and heartily wiſh that we would diſown our *ſins* or our *Baptiſm*, and openly renounce their *Alliance*, or more ſtrictly imitate their *Manners*. And really 'tis a burning Shame that we ſhould profeſs our ſelves Fellow-Citizens with them for no other purpoſe but to *ſcandalize* and *reproach* them; and it were heartily to be wiſhed even for the *Credit* of Heaven and of our bleſſed Brethren that inhabit it, that if we will not be ſo *generous* as to follow their Example, we would at leaſt be ſo *honeſt* as to renounce their Kindred, and not claim a Relation to their Family meerly to *ſhame* and *diſgrace* them.

II. Conſider the *Honour* and *Dignity* of the heavenly Life. For if we may eſtimate Actions by the Examples from whence they are copied, as in other Caſes we are wont to do, doubtleſs the moſt *noble* and *honourable* are ſuch as are copied, from the Lives of the glorious Inhabitants of Heaven. For beſides that ſublime Rank of Dignity whereunto they are advanced, as being the Courtiers and immediate Attendants of the Almighty Sovereign of Heaven and Earth; a Dignity which by how much more it excels that of the greateſt Potentate of this world, by ſo much more it *authorizes* the examples of thoſe that wear it; beſides this, I ſay, their Examples being the moſt perfect Copies and Imitations of the Life of God, are thereby rendred not only more *eminent* and *glorious*, but alſo more *obliging* and *authoritative*. For by following them, we follow God, who is the Standard of all rational Perfection, and who by being the firſt and beſt in the whole kind

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of Rational Entities, is the ſupreme Rule and Meaſure of them all. So that in imitating the bleſſed People above, we imitate thoſe who in *their* Place and Station do live at the ſame Rate as the great God doth in *his*, and regulate themſelves by the ſame infallible Reaſon. We do what God himſelf would do if he were in *our* Place, and what the Son of God himſelf did do when he was in *our* Natures; and there is no other difference between *his* life and *ours*, but what neceſſarily ariſes out of our different States and Relations. And what more *glorious* thing can we do, than to live by the Pattern of *their* Lives, who live ſo exactly by the Pattern of God's? For the Example of living which thoſe bleſſed People ſet us, is the Example of God at *ſecond-hand*; 'tis his moſt rational Life *tranſcribed*, ſo far as it is rationally *imitable*, that is, ſo far as it is *honourable* and *glorious* for a rational Creature to tranſcribe it. For in the State of *finite* Creatures they live in a perfect Conformity to the ſame immutable Reaſon whereby God regulates himſelf in the State of an *infinite* Creator. So that their Example is an Imitation in kind of all thoſe particular Excellencies in him, which they *may* and *ought* to imitate; and 'tis an Imitation in general of that eternal *Decorum* with reſpect to Conditions and States, which he conſtantly obſerves in all his tranſactions with his Creatures. And as their Example is a perfect Copy of God's, ſo 'tis a Copy fitted in all particulars for our Uſe and Imitation. For it doth not only deſcribe to us all thoſe particular *Excellencies* in him which are to be imitated by us, but all thoſe particular *Duties*

to

to which that eternal Law of Equity and Goodneſs by which he governs *himſelf* in *his* State requires of *us* in *ours*; and ſhews not only wherein we are to imitate him *in kind*, but alſo wherein we are to follow him *in general*, in doing what is moſt fit for us in the State and Relation of *Creatures*, even as he doth what is moſt fit for him in the State and Relation of a God and *Creator*. So that the Example of thoſe heavenly Inhabitants is the Example of God himſelf, exactly fitted and attempered to the State and Condition of Creatures. For juſt as they live, the All-wiſe and All-good God himſelf would live, if he were in their State and Relation. Wherefore by imitating their heavenly Lives, and Manners, we do our ſelves the greateſt Right, and do moſt effectually conſult the *Glory* and *Honour* of our own Natures. For whilſt we tread in theirs, we tread in the Footſteps of God, and have his glorious Example to warrant and juſtifie our Actions; we behave our ſelves as it becomes the Children of the King of Heaven, and ſo far as it conſiſts with the condition of Creatures, we live like ſo many Gods in the world; which is doubtleſs the utmoſt height of *Honour* and *Glory* that any rational Ambition can aſpire to. So that methinks had we any ſpark of true Gallantry and Bravery of Mind in us, we ſhould deſpiſe all other kinds of Life but *this*, and pity thoſe gilded Bubbles that have nothing to boaſt of but their fine Clothes, and great Eſtates, and empty Titles of Honour; we ſhould look upon all other Dignities as the trifling Play-games of Children in compariſon with *this*, of living like the great Nobility of Heaven,

Heaven, that do all live by the pattern of the Life of God.

III. Conſider the great *Freedom* and *Liberty* of a heavenly Life. So long as we live *earthy* and *ſenſual* Lives, our free-born Souls are impriſoned in Senſe, and all their Motions are circumſcribed and bounded within the narrow Sphere of *ſenſitive* Goods and Enjoyments. So that when we would follow our Reaſon, and do as that preſcribes and dictates, we find our ſelves miſerably *hampered* and *intangled*; the Luſts of our Fleſh do hang like gyves ſo *heavily* upon us, that whenever our Reaſon and Conſcience call, we cannot move with any *Freedom*, but are fain to *labour* at every Step, and after a few faint Eſſays are utterly *tired* under the weight of our *reluctant* Inclinations. So that the good which many times we would we do not, the Law in our Minds being counter-voted by the Law in our Members. Our Reaſon and Conſcience tell us that we ought to *love* God above all, to *adore* and *worſhip* him, and ſurrender up our ſelves to his Command and Diſpoſal; and we are many times ſtrongly inclined to follow its Dictates and Directions; but alas when we come to put them in Execution, we find ſo many pull-backs within us, ſo many *ſtrong* and *ſtubborn* Averſions to our good Inclinations, that we have not the power to do as we would, or to diſpoſe of our ſelves according to our own moſt reaſonable Deſires, but like miſerable Slaves that are chained to the Oar, we are fain to row on whitherſoever our imperious Luſts do command us, though we plainly ſee we are running on a Rock, and invading our own deſtruction.

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And as we are not free in this ill State of life to follow our *Reaſon*, ſo neither are we free to follow our *Luſts*. For as when we would follow our Reaſon, our Luſts *cling about* and *intangle* us, ſo when we would follow our Luſts our Reaſon *clogs* and *reſtrains* us; and by objecting to us the *Indecency* and *Danger*, the infinite *Turpitude* and *Hazard* of our ſinful Courſes, lays ſo many Rubs in our way that we cannot ſin with any Freedom, but whitherſoever we go we walk like Priſoners with the Shackles of *Shame* and *Fear* on our heels. So that which way ſoever we turn our ſelves, we find that our Power to diſpoſe of our ſelves is under a great *Reſtraint* and *Confinement*, and we can neither get leave of our Luſts to follow our Reaſon, nor of our Reaſon to follow our Luſts. For when we attempt the *latter*, our Reaſon curbs us with *Shame* and *Fear*; and when we endeavour the *former*, our Appetite bridles us with *Diſlike* and *Averſation*. In this extremity therefore what is to be done that we may be *free?* Why the caſe is plain, we muſt reſolve to conquer either our Reaſon or our Luſts: if we conquer our Reaſon, (which we ſhall find by far the *harder* Task of the two) we ſhall acquire the Freedom of *Devils* and *Brutes*, the Freedom to do Miſchief, and wallow in the mire without Shame or Remorſe; but if we conquer our Luſts, we acquire the Freedom of *Men*, yea, of *Saints* and of *Angels*; the freedom to act reaſonably without Reluctance or Averſation; and this being much more *eaſily* to be acquired than the former, I dare appeal to any mans Reaſon which of the two is in it ſelf moſt eligible. If therefore we would vindicate our *rational*

Freedom

Freedom, we muſt reſolve to ſhake off thoſe ſlaviſh Fetters, our *brutiſh* and our *deviliſh* Appetites, that do ſo perpetually *turmoil* and *incumber* us in all our virtuous Attempts and rational Operations; we muſt tie up our ſelves from executing their Commands, and ſerving their wicked Wills and Pleaſures, and heartily reſolve to act as it becomes us in the Capacity of rational Creatures related to *God* and *one another*. And then though *at firſt* we muſt expect to find our ſelves *confined* and *ſtraitened* by our vicious Averſations, we ſhall be immediately releaſed from all that *Shame* and *Fear* which did ſo continually curb us in the career of our Wickedneſs; and even our *vicious* Averſation (if we couragiouſly perſiſt in our *good* Reſolution) will grow weaker and weaker, and be every day leſs and leſs cumberſom to us, till it is *totally* extinguiſhed. And then we ſhall feel our ſelves intirely reſtored into our own Power, and be able without *Check* or *Control* to diſpoſe of our ſelves and all our Motions according as it ſhall ſeem to us moſt *fit* and *reaſonable*; then we ſhall act with the greateſt Vigour and Freedom, having no counter-ſtriving Principles to *reſtrain* or *retard* us, no vicious Averſations on the one ſide, or guilty Shame or Fear on the other to *counterpoize* us in our rational Motions; then we ſhall move without Check or Confinement in a large and noble Sphere, for we ſhall be pleaſed with what is *fit* and *wiſe* and *good* without any Reſerve or Exception, and we ſhall do what we pleaſe without any *Lett* or *Hindrance*. So that by ingaging our ſelves in the *heavenly Life*, we enter into a ſtate of glorious *Liberty*, and if we conſtantly perſiſt

perſiſt in it, and do ſtill *prevalently* liſt to live as becomes us, we ſhall be more and more free to live as we *liſt*, till at laſt we are arrived into a perfect Liberty, wherein we ſhall live without Reſtraint or Controul, without check of Conſcience, or reluctance of Inclination, which are the two main Bars that *confine* and *ſtraiten* men in their Operations. If therefore we would ever be *free*, let us immediately come off from our vicious Courſes to the Practice of this divine and heavenly Life, wherein by degrees, if we couragiouſly hold on, we ſhall wear off thoſe Shackles that do ſo miſerably hamper and intangle us; and then we ſhall be intirely free to do whatſoever our reaſon dictates to us; then we ſhall *run the ways of Gods Commandments*, and like our bleſſed Brethren above be all Life and Spirit and Wing in the diſcharge of our Duty to him.

IV. Conſider the *Pleaſure* of this *heavenly Life*. 'Tis true, there is a ſort of Pleaſure that reſults from all the Acts of a *ſenſual* and *earthly* Converſation; but we find by Experience, that though in the purſuit it ſtrangely *allures* and *inchants* us, yet in the Fruition it always *diſappoints* our Expectation, and ſcarce *performs* in the Enjoyment one half of what it *promiſed* to our Hope; and at the beſt 'tis but a *preſent* and *tranſient* Satisfaction of our *brutiſh* ſenſe, a Satisfaction that *dims* the Light, ſullies the Beauty, *impairs* the Vigour, and *reſtrains* the Activity of the Mind; diverting it from *better* Operations, and indiſpoſing it to the fruition of *purer* Delights; leaving no *comfortable* Reliſh or *gladſom* Memory behind it, but oftentimes *going out* in a ſtink, and *determining*

in Bitterneſs, Regret and Diſgrace. But in each act of this divine and celeſtial Life, there is ſomething of the *Pleaſure* of *Heaven*, ſomething of thoſe *divine* Refreſhments and Conſolations upon which the good People of Heaven do live. For the greateſt part of their Heaven ſprings from within their own Boſoms, even from the Conformity of their Souls to the heavenly State, and the ſprightful out-goings of their Minds and Affections towards the heavenly Objects; from their *contemplating* and *loving*, their *praiſing* and *adoring* the moſt high God, from their *Imitation* of his Perfections, their *Subjection* to his Will, and *Dependence* on his Veracity; all which Acts, as I have already ſhewed, have the moſt *raviſhing* Pleaſures appendant to them, and are ſo neceſſary to the Felicity of rational Creatures, that the Wit of Man cannot fancy a *rational* Heaven without them. For the heaven of a rational Creature conſiſting in the moſt *intenſe* and *vigorous* Exerciſe of its rational Faculties about the moſt *ſuitable* and *convenient* Objects, what Object can be more convenient to ſuch Faculties than that Almighty Soveraign of Beings, whoſe *Power* is the Spring of all *Truth*, and whoſe *Nature* is the Pattern of all *Goodneſs*. So that without a perfect Union of our Minds and Wills and Affections with God, there can be no poſſible *Idea* of a perfect Heaven of rational Pleaſures, but in this bleſſed Union lies the very *Soul* and *Quinteſſence* of Heaven. Since therefore in every Act of every Virtue of the divine Life, there is at leaſt an imperfect Union of the Soul with God, it neceſſarily follows, that there muſt be ſome degree of the Pleaſure of Heaven in

in every one. So that if we do not experience much greater Joy and Delight in the Acts of this divine Life, than ever we did in the higheſt Epicuriſms and Senſualities, 'tis not becauſe there are not much *greater* in them, but becauſe we never exerted them with that *Sprightlineſs* and *Vigour* as we do our ſenſual Appetites and Perceptions; becauſe we are *clogg'd* in the Exerciſe of them either by *falſe* Principles, or *bodily* Indiſpoſitions, or *ſinful* Averſations. But if we would take the pains to *inure* and *accuſtom* our ſelves to theſe heavenly Acts, we ſhould find by degrees they would grow *natural* and *eaſie* to us; and our Souls would be ſo *habituated*, *contempered*, and *diſpoſed* to them that we ſhould upon all Occaſions exert them with great Freedom and Inlargement. And then we ſhould begin to feel and reliſh the Pleaſure of them; then we ſhould perceive a Heaven of Delights ſpringing up from within us, and unfolding it ſelf in each beatifical Act of our heavenly Converſation; then we ſhould find our ſelves under the *central* force of Heaven moſt ſweetly drawn along and attracted thither by the powerful Magnetiſm of its Joys and Pleaſures; and in every act of our celeſtial Behaviour we ſhould have ſome Foretaſte of the celeſtial happineſs. So that now we ſhould no longer need external Arguments to convince us of the Truth and Reality of that bleſſed State; for we ſhould feel it within our ſelves, and be able to penetrate into its bleſſed Myſteries by the light of an infallible Experience. Now we ſhould have no Occaſion to ſearch the *Records* of Heaven to aſſure our ſelves of our intereſt in it; for by a moſt *ſenſible* Earneſt

of Heaven within us, we ſhould be as *fully* ſatisfied of our Title to it, as if one of the winged Meſſengers of Heaven ſhould come down from thence and tell us that he ſaw our Names *inrolled* in the Book of Life. And with this ſweet Experience of Heaven within us we ſhould go on to Heaven with unſpeakable Triumph and Alacrity, being tolled all along from ſtep to ſtep with the alluring Reliſhes of its Joys and Pleaſures; and in every vigorous Exerciſe of every Virtue of the Heavenly Life, we ſhould have ſuch lively *taſtes* and *ſenſations* of Heaven, as would continually excite us to exerciſe them more *vigorouſly*; and ſtill the more *vigorouſly* we exerted them, the *more* of Heaven we ſhould taſte in them; and ſo the *Vigour* of our Virtue would encreaſe the *Pleaſure* of it, and the *Pleaſure* of it encreaſe its *Vigour*, till both are perfected and grown up into the bleſſed State of Heaven. Wherefore as we do love Pleaſure, which is the great Invitation to Action, let us be perſuaded once for all to make a through Experiment of the *heavenly Life*; and if upon a ſufficient Trial you do not find it the moſt *pleaſant* kind of Life that ever you led, if you do not experience a far more noble Satisfaction in it than ever you did in all your *ſtudied* and *artificial* Luxuries, I give you leave to brand me for an *Impoſtor*.

V. Conſider the great *Repoſe* and *Eaſe* of a Heavenly Life and Converſation. In every *ſenſual* and *deviliſh* Courſe of Life, we find by Experience there is a great deal of *Uneaſineſs* and *Diſquiet*. For the Mind is *diſturbed*, the Conſcience *galled*, the Affections *divided* into oppoſite Factions,

Factions, and the whole Soul in a moſt *diſeaſed* and *reſtleſs* Poſture. And indeed it is no Wonder it ſhould be ſo, ſince 'tis in an *unnatural* State and Condition. For whilſt 'tis in any unreaſonable Courſe of Action, the very Frame and Conſtitution of it, as it is a rational Being, ſuffers an unnatural Violence, and is all *unjoynted* and *diſordered*. And therefore as a Body when its Bones are *out*, is never at Reſt till they are *ſet* again; ſo a rational Soul when its Faculties and Powers are *diſlocated* and put out of their *natural*, i. e. *rational* Courſe of Action, is continually *reſtleſs* and *diſturbed*, and always *toſſing* to and fro, *ſhifting* from one Poſture to another, *turning* it ſelf from this to t'other Object and Enjoyment, but finding no eaſe or ſatisfaction in *any*, till 'tis reſtored again to its own rational Courſe of Motion, and that is to act and move towards God, for whom it was made, and in whom alone it can be happy. And if its Reaſon were not ſtrangely *dozed* and *ſtupefied* with Senſe and ſenſitive Pleaſure, it would doubtleſs be a thouſand times more *reſtleſs* and *diſſatisfied* in this its preternatural State than it is; it would feel much more diſtraction of Mind, Anguiſh of Conſcience, and Tumult of Affections than 'tis now capable of, amidſt the numerous Enjoyments and Diverſions of this World. For as a muſical Inſtrument, were it a living thing, would doubtleſs be ſenſible of *Harmony* as its proper State (as a great Author of our own ingeniouſly diſcourſes) and abhor *Diſcord* and *Diſſonancy* as a thing preternatural to it; even ſo were our Reaſon but *alive* and *awake* within us, our Souls, which according to their natural Frame

were made *Uniſon* with God, would be *exquiſitely* ſenſible of thoſe divine Virtues wherein its *Conſonancy* conſiſts, as of that which is its proper State and native Complection; and complain as ſadly of the *vicious* Diſtempers of its Faculties, as the Body doth of *Wounds* and *Diſeaſes*; 'twould be perfectly *ſick* of every unreaſonable Motion, and never be able to *reſt* till its *disjoynted* Faculties were *rectified*, and all its *diſordered* Strings ſet *in tune* again. Which being once effected (as it will *quickly* be in a continued Courſe of heavenly Action) we ſhall preſently find our Souls disburthened of all thoſe *malignant* Humours that do ſo perpetually *diſeaſe*, *diſquiet*, and *diſturb* us. For by *relying* upon God, we ſhall totally quit and diſcharge our ſelves of all thoſe reſtleſs Cares and Anxieties which circle and prick us like a Crown of Thorns; by our hearty *Submiſſion* to his heavenly Will, we ſhall eaſe our Conſciences of all that Horrour, Rage, and Anguiſh which proceeds from the invenomed Stings of our Guilt; by *loving*, *admiring*, and *adoring* him, our Affections will be cured of all that Inconſiſtence and inordinacy that render them ſo *tumultuous* & *diſquieting*. And theſe things being once accompliſhed, the *ſick* and *reſtleſs* Soul will preſently find it ſelf in perfect *Health* and *Eaſe*. For now all her jarring Faculties being tuned to the muſical Laws of Reaſon, there will be a perfect Harmony in her Nature, and ſhe will have no diſquieting Principle within her; nothing but *calm* and *gentle* Thoughts, *ſoft* and *ſweet* Reflections, *tame* and *manageable* Affections, nothing but what abundantly contributes to her *Repoſe* and *Satisfaction*. So that do

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but imagine what an Eaſe the Body enjoys, when after a lingring Sickneſs it recovers a ſound Conſtitution, and feels a lively Vigour poſſeſſing every Part, and actuating the Whole; ſuch and much more is the Eaſe and Quiet of the Soul, when by the diligent Practice of the heavenly Life it feels it ſelf recovered from the languiſhing Sickneſs of a ſenſual and deviliſh Nature. Now ſhe is no more *toſſed* and *agitated* in a ſtormy ſea of reſtleſs Thoughts and guilty Reflections, no more *ſcorched* with Impatience, or *drowned* with Grief, or *ſhook* with Fear, or *bloated* with Pride or Ambition, but all her Affections are reſigned to the bleſſed Empire of a ſpiritual Mind, and cloathed in the Livery of her Reaſon. Now all the War and Conteſt between the Law in her *Members* and the Law in her *Mind* is ended in a glorious Victory and happy Peace; and thoſe *divided* Streams her Will and Conſcience, her Paſſions and her Reaſon are united in *one* Chanel, and flow towards *one* and the ſame Ocean. And being thus joynted and knit together by the Ties and Ligaments of Virtue, the Soul is perfectly *well* and *eaſie*, and enjoys a moſt ſweet *Repoſe* within it ſelf. Wherefore as you value your own Reſt and Eaſe, and would not be endleſly *turmoiled* and *diſquieted*, be perſuaded heartily to ingage your ſelves in the Courſe of a heavenly Converſation; and then though at firſt you muſt expect to find ſome *Difficulty* in it by reaſon of its Contrariety to your corrupt Natures, yet if you vigorouſly *perſiſt* in it, you will find the Difficulty will ſoon *wear off*, and then 'twill be *all* eaſe and pleaſure. For when our Nature is depraved either by *Senſuality* or

Devilishness 'tis like a Bone out of joynt, full of Pain while it is *out*, and much more painful while it is *setting*, but as soon as *that* is done, 'tis immediately *well* and *easie*.

VI. And lastly, Consider the absolute *Necessity* of this heavenly Life and Conversation. For besides that God exacts it of us as an indispensable Condition of our Happiness, and hath assured us that *if we live after the flesh we shall die*, and that *without holiness we shall never see the Lord*; besides this, I say, an heavenly Conversation is in the Nature of the thing *necessary* to qualifie us for Heaven, or, as the Apostle expresses it, *to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*. For Happiness being a *relative* thing, implies in the very Nature of it a mutual *Correspondence* between the *Objects* which present us with happiness, and the *Faculties* which taste and enjoy them; and be the Objects never so good in themselves, never so pregnant with Pleasure and Bliss, yet if they do not *agree* with the Faculties whereunto they are objected instead of *blessing*, they will but *afflict* and *torment* them; and if a man were placed in the midst of Heaven among all the *ravishing* Fruitions with which that blessed place abounds; yet unless his Mind and Temper did *suit* and *agree* with them, they would be so many *Miseries* and *Vexations* to him, and he would be *afflicted* even in *Abraham*'s Bosom, and grope for *Heaven* in the midst of *Paradise*. So that supposing that God were so unreasonably *fond* of the Happiness of wicked Souls as to prefer it before the honour of his Government, and the Purity of his Nature, and the Sanction of his

Laws,

Laws, yet ſtill there is an *invincible* Obſtacle behind that muſt render their future Felicity *impoſſible*; and that is, that it cannot be without a plain *Contradiction* to the Nature of things, the Temper of wicked Souls being wholly *repugnant* to all the Felicities of the other World. So that if they were all ſet before them, they would not be able to enjoy them, but muſt be forced to *pine* and *famiſh* amidſt all that plenty of Delights, there being no viand in all that heavenly Entertainment that they would reliſh any ſweetneſs in. And therefore if God ſhould ſo far pardon them, as not to *puniſh* them himſelf by any immediate ſtroke of Vengeance, *that* would be the *utmoſt* Favour that his Omnipotent Goodneſs could do for them whilſt they continued in their Sins; which, notwithſtanding ſuch a Pardon, would for ever continue them extremely miſerable. And what great matter doth a Pardon ſignifie to a Malefactor that is dying of the Stone or Strangury? He could but have died though he had *not been* pardoned, and die he *muſt* though he *be*. And juſt as little almoſt would it ſignifie to a depraved Soul to be pardoned and abſolved by God, whilſt it hath a Diſeaſe within that preys upon its Vitals, and haſtens it to a certain Ruine. For it could have been but miſerable in the future Life, if it had not been pardoned, and miſerable it muſt be, if it continue wicked, whether it be pardoned or no. For it is not ſo much the Place as the State that makes either Heaven or Hell; and the State of Heaven and Hell conſiſts in perfect *Holineſs* and *Wickedneſs*; and proportionably as we do improve in *either* of theſe, ſo we do approach towards the

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one State or the *other*. For as Heaven is the center of all that is *virtuous*, *pure*, and *holy*, and all that is *good* tends thither by a natural Sympathy; ſo Hell is the center of all *Impiety* and *Wickedneſs*, and all that is *bad* doth naturally preſs and ſink down thither, as towards its proper place and Element; and ſhould not the divine Vengeance concern it ſelf to exclude wicked Souls out of Heaven, yet their own Wickedneſs would do it. For that is a place of ſuch inacceſſible Light and Purity, that no Impurity or Wickedneſs can approach it, but muſt of neceſſity be beaten off with the dreadful lightnings of its Glory, and tumbled headlong down as oft as it eſſays to climb up thither; as on the other hand, ſhould not God by an immediate Vengeance precipitate wicked Souls into Hell, yet their own Wickedneſs by the mighty weight of its own Nature, would inevitably preſs and ſink them down into that miſerable Condition. What egregious Nonſenſe therefore is it, for wicked men to talk of going to Heaven! Alas! poor Creatures what would you do there! There are no wanton *Amours* among thoſe heavenly *Lovers*; no Rivers of *Wine* among their Rivers of pleaſure to gratifie your unbounded *Senſuality*; no *Paraſites* to flatter your lofty *Pride*; no *Miſeries* to feed your meagre *Envy*; no *Miſchiefs* to tickle your deviliſh *Revenge*; nothing but *chaſte* and *divine*, *pure* and *ſpiritual* Enjoyments, ſuch as your *bruriſh* and *deviliſh* Appetites will eternally *loath* and *nauſeate*. Wherefore if we mean to go to Heaven, and to be happy there, we muſt now endeavour to *diſpoſe* and *attemper* our Minds to it; which is no other way to be done, but by leading a heavenly Life

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and Converſation; which by degrees will *habituate* and *naturalize* our Souls to the heavenly Virtues, and ſo *work* and *inlay* them into the Frame and Temper of our Minds, that 'twiil be our greateſt pleaſure to be *exerting* and *exerciſing* them. And then our Souls will be *dreſſed* and *made ready* for Heaven, and when we go from hence to take poſſeſſion of its Joys, they will be all ſo agreeable to our *prepared* Appetites, that we ſhall preſently fall to and feed upon them with infinite Guſt and Reliſh. But till by living a heavenly Life we have diſpoſed our ſelves for Heaven, we are utterly incapable of enjoying it. So that now things are reduced to this Iſſue, that either our *Sins* or our *Souls* muſt die, and we muſt neceſſarily ſhake hands either with *Heaven* or our *Luſts*. And therefore unleſs we value eternal Happineſs ſo little as to exchange it for the *ſordid* and *trifling* pleaſures of Sin, and unleſs we love our Sins ſo well as to ranſom them with the bloud of our Immortal Souls, it concerns us ſpeedily to engage our ſelves in this heavenly Life and Converſation. For this is an eternal and immutable Law, that if we will be *wicked*, we muſt be *miſerable*.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning the militant *or* warfaring *Part of the Chriſtian Life, by which we are to* acquire *and* perfect *the heavenly Virtues; ſhewing how effectually all the Duties of it conduce thereunto.*

HAVING in the former Chapter given a large Account of the *heavenly Part* of the *Chriſtian Life*, and ſhewn how *directly* and *immediately* the Practice of all the Virtues that are comprehended in it tends to the heavenly State, and how *naturally* they all grow into eternal Happineſs; I ſhall in the next Place endeavour to give ſome brief Account of that Part of the *Chriſtian Life* which is purely *militant*, and which wholly conſiſts of thoſe *inſtrumental Duties*, by the Uſe of which we are to conquer the *difficulties* of thoſe heavenly Virtues, and to *acquire* and *perfect* them. Which Difficulties, as I ſhewed before, *Chap.* 2. are the inbred *Corruptions* of our own Nature, together with thoſe manifold *Temptations* from without, by which they are continually *provoked* and *excited*: and ſo to *ſubdue* and *conquer* theſe, as that they may neither take us off *from*, nor clog and indiſpoſe us *in* the Exerciſe of the *heavenly Virtues*, is the great Deſign and Buſineſs of this *warfaring* Part of the Chriſtian Life.

That I may therefore handle it diſtinctly, I ſhall divide it into three Parts, and endeavour with

with as much Brevity as I can; First, To *explain* the Duties of each Part, and to ſhew how they all conduce to our *conquering* the Difficulties of the *heavenly Virtues*, and to the *acquiring* and *perfecting* them; and, Secondly, To *preſs* the Duties of each Part with *proper* and *ſuitable* Arguments.

In this Part of our Chriſtian Life therefore there is,

1. Our *Beginning* or *Entrance* into it, which is in Scripture called, *Repentance from dead works.*

2. Our *Courſe* and *Progreſs* in it, and this is nothing but a *holy Life.*

3. Our *Perfecting* and *Conſummation* of it, and this is *final Perſeverance* in well-doing. Each of which have their proper and peculiar Duties, which I ſhall endeavour in this Chapter to *explain* and *enforce.*

SECT. I.

Concerning thoſe Duties that are proper to our Beginning *and* Entrance *into this* warfaring *Part of our Chriſtian Life; ſhewing how they all conduce to the* ſubduing *of Sin, and* acquiring *the heavenly* Virtues.

This firſt Part of our *militant* Life being nothing but our *Initial* Repentance, or the firſt *turning* of our Souls to God from a ſtate of wilful Sin and Rebellion, the Duties that are proper to it, and by which this *turn* of our Souls is to be introduced and performed, may be reduced to theſe ſix Heads,

1. A hearty and firm *Belief* of the Truth of our *Religion.*

2. A

2. A due *Conſideration* of its *Motives*, and a balancing of them with the *Hardſhips* and *Difficulties* we are to undergo.

3. A deep and through *Conviction* of our great need of a *Mediator* to render us acceptable to God.

4. A hearty *Sorrow*, *Shame*, and *Remorſe* for our Sins paſt.

5. Earneſt *Prayer* to God for *Aid* and *Aſſiſtance* to enable us effectually to renounce them.

6. A ſerious and well weighed *Reſolution* to forſake and abandon them for ever.

1. It is neceſſary to our good *Beginning* of this our *Chriſtian Warfare*, that we ſhould heartily *believe* the *Truth* and *Reality* of our Religion. For our hearty *Belief* of the Goſpel is in Scripture repreſented as the main and principal Weapon by which we are to combate againſt the World and our own Luſts. And hence it is called *the ſhield of faith*, and *the breaſtplate of faith*, which are the two principal parts of Armour of *Defence*, denoting that an hearty *Belief* of the Goſpel is the principal *Defence* of a Chriſtian againſt all the *fiery darts* of Temptation; the Armour of Proof that guards our Innocence, and renders us Invulnerable in all our ſpiritual Conflicts. For, *above all things*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *take the ſhield of faith whereby ye ſhall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one*, Eph. vi. 16. And as it is the principal part of our *defenſive*, ſo it is alſo of our *offenſive* Armour. For ſo we find all the Victories and Triumphs of thoſe glorious Heroes, *Heb.* xi. attributed to this irreſiſtible Weapon of their Faith. 'Twas by Faith that they deſpiſed Crowns, confronted the

the Anger of Kings, and triumphed over the bittereſt Torments and Afflictions; *by faith that they wrought righteouſneſs, obtained promiſes, ſtopped the mouth of Lions, quenched the violence of fire, eſcaped the edge of the ſword, and out of weakneſs were made ſtrong.* Nay, ſo great a ſhare hath *Faith* in the Succeſſes of our *Chriſtian Warfare*, that it is called by the Apoſtle, *the good fight of faith*, 1 Tim. vi. 13. and *S. John* aſſures us, that *this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*, 1 Joh. v. 4.

For if we firmly *believe* the Goſpel, that will furniſh us with undeniable Anſwers to return to all Temptations, and enable us infinitely to *outbid* the World whatſoever it ſhould proffer us for our Innocence. For our *Belief* of the Goſpel carries in the one hand infinitely greater *Goods*, and in the other infinitely greater *Evils* to *allure* and *bind* us faſt to our Duty, than any the World can propoſe to *entice*, or *terrifie* us from it. For on the one hand it diſcovers to us thoſe immortal Regions of the Bleſſed, which are the proper Seat and pure Element of Happineſs; where the bleſſed Inhabitants live in a continued Fruition of their utmoſt Wiſhes, being every moment entertained with freſh and inraviſhing Scenes of Pleaſure; where all their Happineſs is *eternal*, and all their Eternity nothing elſe but one continued Act of *Love*, and *Praiſe*, and *Joy*, and *Triumph*; where there are no *Sighs* or *Tears*; no intermixtures of *Sorrow* or *Miſery*, but every Heart is full of *Joy*, and every Joy is a *Quinteſſence*, and every happy Moment is crowned with ſome freſh and new Enjoyment. On the other hand it ſets before

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our eyes a moſt *frightful* and *amazing* Proſpect of thoſe diſmal Shades of Horrour, where mighty Numbers of condemned Ghoſts perpetually wander to and fro, tormented with endleſs *Rage* and *Deſpair*; where they always *burn* without *conſuming*, always *faint*, but never *die*, being forced to languiſh out a long Eternity in unpitied Sighs and Groans. And after ſuch a Proſpect as this, what *poor*, *inconſiderable* Trifles will all the Goods and Evils of this world appear to us? But yet unleſs we *believe* the Reality of them, how great ſoever they may be in *themſelves*, they will ſignifie no more to our *Hope* and *Fear* (which are the Maſter Springs of our Action) than if they were ſo many golden *Dreams* or liveleſs *Scare-crows*. For all Propoſals of good and evil do work upon the Minds of men proportionably as they are *believed* and *aſſented* to; and as that which is not *true*, *is not*, ſo that which we do not *believe*, is to us as if it *were not*. How then is it poſſible we ſhould be moved by that Good or Evil which we do not *believe*, and in which by conſequence we cannot apprehend our ſelves *concerned*.

Wherefore in our *Entrance* into the *Chriſtian Warfare*, it is highly neceſſary that we do not take up our Faith at a *venture*, and believe *winking*, without knowing *why* or *wherefore*; but that we ſhould, ſo far as we are able, impartially examine the *Evidences* of our Religion, and ſearch into the *Grounds* of its *Credibility*, that ſo we may be able to give ſome Reaſon to *our ſelves* and *others* of the Hope that is in us. For which End it will be needful that we ſhould read, and impartially conſider, ſome of the *Apologies* for the *Chriſtian Religion*;

Religion; of which we have ſundry excellent ones in our own Languag*; and if we will but take the pains to inſtruct our ſelves in the *plain* and *eaſie* Evidences of *Chriſtianity*, we ſhall quickly ſee abundant cauſe to aſſent to it; and then our Faith, being founded on a firm Baſis of Reaſon, will be able to bid defiance to the World, and to out-ſtand the moſt furious Storms of Temptation.

* Dr. *Stillingfleets* Origines. Dr. *Patricks* Tranſlation of *Grotius*. Sir *Charles Wolſely*.

II. To our good *Beginning* of this our *Chriſtian Warfare*, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould duly *conſider* the *Motives* of our Religion, and balance them with the *Hardſhips* and *Difficulties* we are to undergo. For thus our Saviour makes *Conſideration* a neceſſary Introduction to our *Chriſtian Warfare*, *Luke* xiv. 28. where he compares mens ruſhing headlong into the Difficulties of the Chriſtian Life without Conſideration, to a mans reſolving to build a Tower without computing the Charge of it, or a Kings going to War without ever conſidering before-hand whether with his Army of Ten Thouſand he be able to encounter his Enemy with Twenty. By both which Compariſons he intimates to us the unproſperous Iſſue of mens liſting themſelves under his Banner to combate the Devil, the World, and their own Luſts without ever conſidering before-hand either their *own* ſtrength or their *Enemies*, the Arguments with which *they* muſt fight, or the Difficulties that will *croſs* and *oppoſe* them. So that when they come to execute their raſh Reſolutions, there ſtart up ſo many Difficulties in their way which

they never *thought of*, and againſt which they took no care to *fore-arm* themſelves, that they have not the Heart and Courage to ſtand before them, but after a few faint Attempts are preſently ſounding a cowardly Retreat.

For indeed *Conſideration* is the Life and Soul of Faith, that *animates* and *actuates* its Principles, and *elicites* and *draws forth* all their natural Power and Energy. And let the Truths we believe be never ſo *weighty* and *momentous* in themſelves, never ſo apt to *ſpirit* and *invigorate* us, yet unleſs we ſeriouſly *conſider* and *apply* them to our Wills and Affections, and take the pains to extract out of them their native Vigour and Efficacy, and to infuſe it into our Faculties and Powers, they will lie like ſo many dead Notions in our Minds, and never impart to us the leaſt Degree of ſpiritual Courage and Activity. And accordingly our Saviour attributes the ill Succeſs of Gods Word in the Hearts of men (which he compares to the *high-way*, the *ſtony* and *thorny* Ground) either to their not conſidering it *at all*, or to their not conſidering it *deeply* enough, or to their not conſidering it *long* enough. Either the divine Truths which they heard went no farther than their Ears, and ſo lay openly expoſed like ſo many looſe corns upon the high-way to be picked up by the Fowls of the Air; or if it entred into their Mind and Conſideration, it was ſo *ſlightly* and *ſuperficially*, that like Corn ſown in a rocky ground it had not Depth enough to take root, to *faſten* and *grow* into their minds, and *digeſt* into Principles of Action; or if they at preſent received it into their deeper and more ſerious Conſideration, it was

was but for *a little while*, for by and by they permit their worldly Cares and Pleaſures, like Thorns, to ſpring up in their Thoughts and choak it, before it was arrived to any Maturity. But that which rendred it ſo *proſperous* and *fruitful* in good and honeſt Hearts, was, that having heard the Word they *kept it*, *i. e.* retained it in their *Thoughts* and *Conſideration*, and ſo *brought forth fruit with patience*, Luke viii. 12, 13, 14, 15. So that to the making of a good *Beginning* in Religion, it is not only neceſſary that we ſhould *ponder* the Motives and Arguments of Religion, and balance them with the Difficulties of it, but that we ſhould *revolve* and *repeat* them on our minds till we have repreſented to our ſelves with the utmoſt Life and Reality, whatſoever makes *for* and *againſt* our Entrance into the Chriſtian Warfare; and upon our having weighed them over and over in the Scales of an even and impartial Judgment, we have brought the Debate to this Reſult and Concluſion, that there is infinitely more Weight in the *Arguments* of Religion to *perſuade* us to it, than in all the *Difficulties* of it to *diſhearten* us from it. For unleſs we enter into Religion *fore-armed* with the Motives, and *forewarned* of the difficulties of it, we ſhall never be able to ſtand our Ground; but finding more *Oppoſition* than we expected, and having not a ſufficient Strength of Argument to *bear up* againſt it, we ſhall quickly *repent* of our raſh Undertaking, and be forced to *retreat* from it with Shame and Diſhonour. For this is uſually the Iſſue of thoſe *raſh* and *unſetled* purpoſes which men make in the heats of their Paſſion; when they have

been *warmed* by some pathetick Discourse, or *startled* by some great Danger, or *chafed* into a Displeasure against their Sins by the sense of some very dolorous Accident whereinto they have been betrayed by them; in these or such like Cases, its usual with men to make *hasty* Resolutions of Amendment, without considering either the *Matters* which they resolve upon, or the *Motives* which should support their Resolution; and so finding when they come to Practice, more Difficulty in the Matter than they were aware of, and having not sufficient Motives to carry them through it, their Resolution *flags* in the Execution, and very often *yields* to the next Temptation which encounters them.

Now though I do not deny but that those Heats of Passion are good Opportunities to *begin* our Religion in, and if *wisely* improved will very much contribute to our Voyage Heavenwards, and like a brisk Gale of Wind render it much more *expedite* and *easie*; yet if in these Heats we resolve too soon, without a due Consideration of all Particulars, and of the Difficulties on the one side, and the Arguments on the other, it is hardly possible that our Resolution should ever prove a lasting Principle of Goodness. For when we resolve *inconsiderately*, we resolve to do we know not *what*, and our Resolution includes a thousand particulars that we are not *aware* of; most of which being repugnant to our vicious Inclinations, will when we come to practise them be attended with such Difficulties as will easily startle our weak Resolution, which having not a sufficient Foundation of Reason to support it, will never

never be able to out-ſtand thoſe boiſterous Storms of Temptation whereunto it will be continually expoſed. If therefore we mean our Reſolution ſhould *hold out*, and commence a living Principle of Goodneſs, we muſt found it in a through *Conſideration* both of the *Duties* and *Difficulties* of Religion, and of the *Motives* which ſhould ingage us to embrace it; we muſt ſet before our Minds all the Sins we muſt *part with*, and all the Duties we muſt *ſubmit to*, and fairly repreſent to our ſelves all the Difficulties and Temptations wherewith we muſt *ingage*; and as much as in us lies render them *actual* and *preſent* to us, by ſuppoſing our ſelves *already* ingaged in our Spiritual Warfare, and ſurrounded with all the Temptations both from within and without that we can reaſonably expect will oppoſe themſelves againſt us; and having thus placed our ſelves in the midſt of the Difficulties of Religion, we muſt never ceaſe urging our ſelves with the great Arguments and Motives of it, till we have throughly perſuaded our ſtubborn Will, and obtained of them an explicite Conſent to every Duty that calls for our Conſent and Reſolution.

III. To our good *Beginning* of the *Chriſtian Warfare* it is alſo neceſſary that we be *deeply* and *throughly* convinced of our great need of a *Mediator* to make a Propitiation for our Sins, and render us acceptable to God. For 'tis to convince us of this neceſſary Truth that the Scripture doth ſo expreſly declare, that as *there is one God*, ſo *there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. that *if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt*

the righteous, and that *he is the Propitiation for our ſins, and not for ours only, but for the ſins of the whole world*; and that *'tis for his Name ſake that our ſins are forgiven*, 1 John ii. 1, 2, 12. that *we have redemption through his bloud*, Eph. i. 7. and that *without the ſhedding his bloud there is no remiſſion*, and that *'twas by the ſacrifice of himſelf that Chriſt put away ſin*; Heb. ix. 22, 26. that *we are accepted of God through his beloved Son*, Eph. i. 6. that *Chriſt is entred into heaven now to appear in the preſence of God for us*, Heb. ix. 24. and that there *he ever lives to make interceſſion for us*, Heb. vii. 25. that *'tis through him that we have acceß unto the Father*, Epheſ. ii. 18. and *by him that we have admittance to his grace and favour*, Rom. v. 2. The deſign of all which is, throughly to *convince* us of this great truth, that by our Apoſtaſie from God and Rebellion againſt him we have all rendred our ſelves ſo very obnoxious to his Vengeance, that he would not pardon us upon any leſs *Atonement* than the precious Bloud, nor admit us into favour upon any leſs *Motive* than the powerful Interceſſion of his own Son; that by the heinouſneſs of our Guilt we have ſo highly incenſed the Father of Mercies againſt us, that no leſs conſideration than the *Death* and *Advocation* of the greateſt and deareſt Perſon in the whole world will move him to admit of our Repentance, and liſten to our Supplications. And certainly next to exacting the puniſhment due to our ſins at our *own hands*, the moſt dreadful Severity he could have expreſſed was to reſolve not to remit it upon any other conſideration than that of his own Sons undergoing it in *our ſtead*; by which he hath given

given us the greateſt reaſon that Heaven and Earth could afford to tremble at his Juſtice, even whilſt we are incloſed in the Arms of his Mercy.

This therefore we ought to be deeply and throughly convinced of, that our Sins have ſet us at ſuch a *diſtance* from God, that 'tis nothing but the bloud of Chriſt will *reconcile* him to us; and that though *without* our Repentance he will never be reconciled to us, yet 'tis not for the ſake of that or any thing elſe *we* can do, that he will be induced to receive us into favour, but only for the ſake of that precious Sacrifice which his Eternal Son hath offered up for us. The firm *Perſuaſion* and *Conſideration* of which will mightily *overawe* our minds, and imprint upon them ſuch *gaſtly* and *horrible* Apprehenſions of ſin, as will *ſcare* us from all thoughts of Compliance with it, the dreadful demonſtration which God hath given us of his righteous ſeverity againſt it in the very Reaſon of his pardoning it, will effectually *antidote* us againſt all our ſinful Securities and Confidences: For this way of Gods pardoning us upon the Sacrifice of his Son, guards his Mercy with ſuch an awful Terrour, as is ſufficient to diſhearten the moſt deſperate Sinner from preſuming upon it. For he that dares preſume to ſin on upon a Mercy that coſt the Bloud of the Son of God, hath courage enough to *out-face* the Flames of Hell, and is not capable of any Mercy that the great God can indulge with ſafety to his own Authority. For what Mercy can be ſafe from that mans *Abuſe* and *Preſumption*, that dares abuſe a Mercy ſo *guarded* and *ſecured* as this is,

by being founded upon ſuch a dreadful Conſideration?

And as a through Perſuaſion of the Neceſſity of *Chriſts Sacrifice* to the Forgiveneſs of our Sins will fill us with awful Apprehenſions of the divine Severity, and ſet before us a moſt diſmal Proſpect of the vaſt demerit of our Sin, both which are neceſſary to ingage us to a through Reformation; ſo a through conviction of the Neceſſity of his *Interceſſion* to render our *Duties*, our *Prayers*, and *Perſons* acceptable to God, will effectually *humble* and *abaſe* us in our own eyes, which, as I ſhall ſhew you by and by, is highly conducive to a good *Beginning* of this our *Chriſtian Warfare*. For next to *baniſhing* us from his Preſence *for ever*, the moſt effectual courſe God could take to *abaſe* us was to exclude us from all *immediate* Intercourſe with him, and not to admit of any more Addreſſes or Supplications from us, but only through the hands of a *Mediator*; which is a plain Demonſtration how infinitely *pure* he is, and how *baſe* and *vile* our Sins have rendred us: inſomuch that he will not ſuffer a ſinful Creature to come near him otherwiſe than by a *Proxy*, that he will not accept of a *Service* from a guilty Hand, nor liſten to a *Prayer* from a ſinful Mouth, till 'tis firſt *hallowed* and *preſented* to him by a *pure* and *holy* Mediator. So that unleſs we are ſtrangely *inconſiderate*, we cannot but be touched with a deep ſenſe of our own *Vileneſs*, when we think at what a *diſtance* the pure and holy God keeps us; how he *ſtands off* at the Stench of our Abominations, and notwithſtanding all his Benignity towards us, will neither *hear us*, nor have any thing to do with

with us, without the powerful *Interceſſion* of his own Son.

And as our Conviction of the Neceſſity we have of Chriſts *Sacrifice* and *Interceſſion* is very apt to affect us with holy *Sorrow* and *Fear*, both which are very powerful Inſtruments of our Reformation; ſo our perſuaſion of the Reality and Excellency of his *Mediation* is no leſs apt to inſpire us with a mighty *Hope* and *Aſſurance* of Acceptance with God, if we reform and amend. For it ſeems that upon *propitiatory* Sacrifices and *interceding* Spirits, guilty Minds have been always inclined to place their Confidence of Acceptance with God. Hence it was a Principle generally received by men of all Nations and Religions, (however it came to paſs I know not,) that for ſinful men to appeaſe the incenſed Divinity it was neceſſary, firſt, that ſome *Life* ſhould be *ſacrificed* to him by way of *Satisfaction* for their Sins, and that the *nobler* it was, the more *propitious* it rendred him. 1. That ſome high Favourite of his ſhould be prevailed with to *intercede* with him in their behalf. Whereupon underſtanding by univerſal Tradition that there were a ſort of *middle Beings* (whom they call *Demons*, and we *Angels*) between the ſovereign God and Men, they began to addreſs to *theſe*, and to bribe them with ſacred Honours to *interpoſe* with God in their behalf. And if they could make a ſhift to rely upon *Sacrifices*, the moſt precious of which were the Lives of ſinful Men; and to depend upon *Interceſſors* of whoſe Intereſt with God they had little or no Security; what a mighty ground of Confidence and Aſſurance have *we*, for whom the Son of God

God once offered ſuch a *meritorious* Sacrifice upon Earth, and continues to make ſuch a *powerful* Interceſſion in Heaven? For beſides that, as he was a *ſpotleſs* and *innocent* Perſon, his Sacrifice was *wholly* meritorious for guilty Offenders; and beſides that, as he was a Perſon of infinite *Value* and *Dignity* his Sacrifice was meritorious for *a World* of guilty Offenders; God, upon whoſe good pleaſure the *Admiſſion* or *Refuſal* of it intirely depended, has openly declared his Acceptation thereof as a Propitiation for the ſins of the World, and ingaged himſelf by a publick *Grant* and *Charter* of Mercy to indemnifie for the ſake of it every ſinner in the World that will but return to him by a ſerious and hearty Repentance; neither of which great things could ever be ſaid of any *other* Sacrifice. And in the virtue of this *Sacrifice*, as well as of his own perſonal *Intereſt* with his Father, he now *intercedes* in our behalf; and pleading our Cauſe, as he doth, with the price of our Souls in his hand, even his precious Bloud by which he redeemed them, we may be ſure that with that powerful *Oratory* he cannot fail of ſucceeding in our behalf. For having *purchaſed* for us by his Bloud, all thoſe favours which he *interceeds* for, he is inveſted with the Right and Power of *beſtowing* them upon us. So that now, for our greater Security, all thoſe Favours which God hath *promiſed* us, are actually *depoſited* in the hands of our *Mediator*; and though his bare Promiſe is in it ſelf as great an Aſſurance as can be given us; yet it is to be conſidered that guilty Minds are naturally *anxious* and full of unreaſonable *Jealouſies*, and conſequently whilſt they

they looked upon God as their *adverſe* party, and a party infinitely *offended* by them, would have been very prone to *ſuſpect* the worſt, had they had nothing but his bare Word to depend on. And therefore in Condeſcenſion to this pitiable Infirmity of his ſinful Creatures, he hath not only *promiſed* them his acceptance and Favour upon Condition of their Return to him, but hath alſo put the *Performance* of his Promiſe into a *third Hand*, even into the Hand of a *Mediator*, who by the Nature of his Office is *equally* concerned for both Parties; as well that God ſhould perform his *Promiſe*, if we performed our *Duty*, as that we ſhould perform our *Duty* if we received the Benefit of his *Promiſe*. And hence, *Heb.* vii. 22. our Mediator is called the *Sponſor*, or *Surety of a better Covenant*. So that now we have no longer to do with God *immediately* as our adverſe Party; but by a *Mediator*, who by his Office is obliged to be on *our* ſide as well as *Gods*, and to take care that neither receive the *others* part of the Covenant without performing his *own*. Thus as he hath been ſometimes pleaſed in Compliance with humane Weakneſs to enforce his *Promiſe* with his *Oath*, not that the *one* is in its own Nature a greater Security from *God* than the *other*, but becauſe with *Men* an *Oath* is more obliging than a *Promiſe*; ſo in great Condeſcenſion to the unreaſonable *Diffidence* of our guilty Minds, he hath not only *promiſed* us Pardon and Acceptance upon our Repentance, but he hath alſo given us a *collateral Security* for the Performance of it, even the Security of a *Mediator*, in whoſe hands he hath *depoſited* whatſoever he

hath

hath promiſed us. Not that *in it ſelf* this is a greater Security than his own bare Word and Promiſe, which he cannot *falſifie* without renouncing his Being: but becauſe this way of giving Security by a *third Perſon* is more *accommodate* to the Method of our Covenants and Agreements with one another, and conſequently more apt to ſatisfie our *anxious* and *diffident* Minds.

And thus the Conviction of our need of a *Mediator*, and the Perſuaſion of the *Reality* and *Excellency* of his Mediation will powerfully work both on our *Hope* and *Fear*, which are the main Springs of all our religious Endeavours; and give us at once the moſt *horrible* Proſpect of the Evil of Sin, and the moſt *comfortable* Aſſurance of Pardon and Acceptance with God upon our Repentance and Amendment; both which are abſolutely neceſſary to our ſucceſsful *Entrance* into the *Chriſtian Warfare*.

IV. To our *Beginning* of this *Holy Warfare* it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould be affected with a deep *Sorrow* and *Shame* and *Remorſe* for our paſt Iniquities. For this the Apoſtle calls *ſorrowing to repentance*, and tells us that *godly ſorrow worketh repentance to ſalvation not to be repented of*, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10. and accordingly it is recorded of S. *Peters* Converts that the beginning of their repentance was their being *prick'd at the heart*, Acts ii. 37. and even Repentance it ſelf is in Scripture called *a broken and contrite heart*, this being the moſt immediate Preparation to a true Repentance or Change of mind, *Pſal.* li. 17. And hence the ancient Penitents are deſcribed in Scripture as *girding them-*

themſelves with ſackcloth, and repenting in duſt and aſhes; in Alluſion to the ancient manner of *great* and *ſolemn* Mournings, which was to put on *Sackcloth*, cover the Head with *Aſhes*, and ſit in the *Duſt*. And in the Primitive and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity it is evident that the *bittereſt* Sorrows and Remorſes were looked upon as neceſſary Preparations to Repentance: for the Penitents in thoſe days, as *Tertullian* and *Nazianzen* deſcribes them, "Lay proſtrate at the Church doors "in Sackcloth and Aſhes, ſupplicating the Prayers "of the Presbyters and Widows, hanging on the "Garments and Knees of thoſe that entred into "the Church, kiſſing their Footſteps, and with "rivers of Tears in their eyes beſeeching their "Prayers to God for their Pardon. Now though we are not under the Severities of ſuch an *Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline*, yet we are equally obliged with thoſe ancient Penitents to exerciſe it *internally* in our Hearts. For ſin is as bad *now* as it was *then*, and as great an evil in *us*, as it was in *them*; and therefore ought to be lamented by us with an *equal* Sorrow and Remorſe. And indeed if we ever mean to wage War with it with Succeſs, it is neceſſary we ſhould acquire before-hand a through *ſenſe* and *feeling* of the evil of it; that we ſhould *chaſtiſe* our ſouls with ſome degree of that *bitter* Sorrow and Regret it deſerves, and inflict upon our ſelves ſome part of that Hell of infinite *Horrour* and *Anguiſh* that is ingendring in its Womb; that ſo being the more *ſenſible* of its Malignity, we may be the more *enraged* againſt it, and enter the Liſts with it with the greater *Reſolution* and *Animoſity*. For our Sorrow and Remorſe for

for our Sins, if it be *ſerious* and *hearty*, will convert into *Hatred* and *Indignation* againſt them, and that Hatred will *animate* us in all our Conflicts with them, and render us more *obſtinate* againſt their Terrours and Allurements. So that when in the aftercourſe of our Warfare againſt them, we are tempted afreſh to *yield* and *comply* with them, the Remembrance of the paſt *Shame* and *Sorrow*, *Remorſe* and *Confuſion* we have undergone for *their* ſakes, will render us far more *deaf* and *inexorable* than otherwiſe we ſhould be to their Solicitations.

If therefore we would engage in this ſpiritual Warfare with ſucceſs, we muſt be often *reflecting* upon our paſt Sins, and *repreſenting* them to our ſelves in all their *aggravating* Circumſtances. And when we have ſurveyed them *round about*, and conſidered them in all their natural *Turpitude*, *Diſingenuity*, and *Indecency*, and applied them to our ſelves with all their *appendant* Stings, *ſhameful* Effects, and *diſmal* Circumſtances, ſo that our hearts begin to *feel* them, and to *ſmart* and *bleed* under the dolorous Senſe of them; then muſt we pour them out before God in *ſad* and *mournful* Confeſſions. For the very *Confeſſion* of our Sins before ſo pure and great a Being, is in it ſelf an effectual Means to encreaſe our Shame and Sorrow for them; and he muſt have a very hard Heart that can *ingenuouſly* and without any *Reſerve* lay open his crimes before the God of Heaven and Earth in all their *black* Aggravations, without being *ſtung* with a ſenſible Regret and Confuſion; eſpecially if he frequently repeat his Confeſſions as he ought to do.

V. To

V. To our ſucceſsful *Beginning* of this our *Chriſtian Warfare* it is alſo neceſſary that we earneſtly *implore* the divine *Aid* and *Aſſiſtance* to enable us to go through with it. For God knowing how unable we are *of our ſelves* to engage in this great Enterprize with that good Conduct that is neceſſary to give us any probability of Succeſs, hath promiſed us his own *Preſence* and *Aſſiſtance* even from the *Beginning* to the *End* of it; and if in any part of it his Aſſiſtance be neceſſary, 'tis doubtleſs in the *Entrance*, which, as I ſhall ſhew you by and by, is by far the moſt *difficult* and *hazardous*. If therefore we preſume to *enter* upon it without *ſupplicating* God to *ſecond* us with his Grace and Aſſiſtance, we ſhall quickly find our ſelves ſhamefully *foiled* and *defeated*. For though he hath promiſed to aſſiſt us, yet 'tis upon Condition that we earneſtly *beg* and *ſeek* him; he will *give his Spirit*, but it is *to thoſe that ask it*, Luke xi. 13. he will *draw near unto us*, but firſt *we muſt draw near unto him*, James iv. 8. and we are aſſured that *we ſhall have if we ask*, *that we ſhall find if we ſeek*, *and that it ſhall be opened to us if we knock*, Matt. vii. 7. And therefore we are bid to *go boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy*, *and find grace to help us in the time of need*, Heb. iv. 16. and not only to *pray without ceaſing*, 1 Theſſ. v. 17. but *in every thing by prayer and ſupplication to let our requeſts be made known unto God*, Phil. iv. 6. and if in *every thing* we ought to make known our wants to him, then much more in this *great* and *difficult* Undertaking, in which it will be impoſſible for us to ſucceed without his heavenly Aid and Aſſiſtance.

Where-

Wherefore as we hope for Victory in this our *ſpiritual Warfare*, we muſt earneſtly implore his *Concurrence* with us, and beſeech him to *ſecond* us in all our weak Efforts and Endeavours. We muſt lay open our woful Caſe before him, and remonſtrate to him that we are heartily *willing* to do what we are *able*, but that without him we are abundantly ſenſible all will be *in vain*. We muſt tell him that our Dependance is *upon* him, and that all our Hope of Succeſs is *in* him; and that we dare not ſtir one ſtep *without* him; and beſeech him that he will not *ſtand by*, and ſee us ſpend our ſelves in *ineffectual* Struglings, but that he will graciouſly ſtretch forth his *helping* Hand to us, and not ſuffer us to miſcarry for want of his neceſſary *Aſſiſtance*. Which if we do, we may aſſure our ſelves that the merciful God, who is the Father of our Spirits, will never *abandon* his own offſpring whilſt it cries out to him, and with pitiful and bemoaning Looks implores his *Aid* and gracious *Co-operation*.

Whilſt therefore we are thus endeavouring to prepare our ſelves for our ſpiritual Warfare, we ought in every act of Preparation to *look up* to God, and earneſtly *ſupplicate* the Concurrence of his Grace and Spirit. While we are endeavouring to *believe*, we muſt beg him *to help our unbelief*, to remove all *Prejudices* from our minds, and preſent the Evidences of our Religion to our Underſtandings in a *clear* and *convincing* Light. When we are ſetting our ſelves to a ſerious *Conſideration*, we muſt beſeech him to *fix* our Thoughts, to *ſuggeſt* to, and *repeat* his heavenly Motives and Arguments ſo faſt and thick upon our Minds, that no

no ſinful or worldly Thought may be able to crowd in to *diſturb* or *divert* our Meditations. When we are labouring to perſuade our ſelves of our Need, and the Reality of our Saviours *Mediation*, we muſt earneſtly intreat him to open our eyes, and convince us effectually of the horrible *Danger* of our ſin, and of the infallible *Efficacy* of that bleſſed Remedy. When we are attempting to *affect* our ſelves with the bitter Senſe of our paſt Tranſgreſſions, we muſt implore him to ſtrike in with us, and to inſpire our Minds with ſuch *piercing* and *powerful* Convictions of the infinite *Shame*, *Baſeneſs*, and *Danger* of them, as may ſting our *brawny* Conſciences to the quick, and diſſolve our *frozen* Souls into a ſorrowful Repentance; that ſo when we enter the Liſts and proceed to *Reſolution*, which is the *Beginning* of our Spiritual warfare, we may be armed againſt our Sins with ſuch a lively *Faith*, ſuch puiſſant *Conſiderations*, ſuch *Horror* and *Animoſity* againſt them, and ſuch an aſſured *Hope* of being reſcued from the fatal Iſſues and Effects of them, as that we may be able to promiſe our ſelves a happy Succeſs in the enſuing *Courſe* of our warfare againſt them. And having thus fitted and accoutred our ſelves for this great and momentous Enterprize;

VI. We are to enter into a ſerious and ſolemn *Reſolution* of Amendment, of forſaking and renouncing all our Sins, and never returning to them more, whatſoever Temptations may *invite*, or Difficulties *encounter* and *oppoſe* us. Which *Reſolution* is in Scripture called μετάνοια, which we tranſlate *Repentance*, but in ſtrictneſs ſignifies a *Change of Mind* or of Purpoſe and Reſolution,

a renouncing our *ſinful* Purpoſes, and ſolemnly ingaging our ſelves in a contrary Reſolution of *living ſoberly and righteouſly and godly in this preſent World.* So that whereſoever the Precept of Repentance is expreſſed by this word, the meaning of it is, to oblige us to *change* the wicked *Purpoſes* of our Hearts into a firm and ſerious *Reſolution* of forſaking all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and entirely reſigning up our ſelves to the Will and diſpoſal of God. And hence it is that μετανοεῖν and ἐπιστρέφειν, *i. e.* to *change our minds* and *convert* or *turn* are in Scripture ſo often put together; the one denoting the *inward* Change of our Reſolution, the other the *outward* Change of our Practice purſuant to it. So *Acts* iii. 19. *repent and be converted*, and *Acts* xxvi. 20. *that they ſhould repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance*; that is, that they ſhould reſolve to forſake their ſins, and ſubmit to their Duty, and put their Reſolution into Practice. And ſo that other word μεταμέλεια, which we alſo render *Repentance*, ſtrictly ſignifies *an after-care*, that is purſuant unto this μετάνοια or *Change of Reſolution.*

Now this Repentance or Change of Reſolution is the *Initial* Act of the Religion of Sinners, whereby they *reſume* their inward man from the Service of ſin, and *ſubmit* and *reſign* their Wills to God; whereby in Heart and Will they *forſake* the Devils Colours, and liſt themſelves *Volunteers* under the Banner of Chriſt. And being ſo, it ought to be performed with ſo much the more *Care* and *Preparation.* For the *Beginning* of all great Enterprizes is the *Ground* and *Foundation* of them; which if it be not firmly laid will be apt

to

to ſink under the *Superſtructures*, and to endanger their Ruine and Downfal. Now all the *foregoing* Duties being neceſſary Preparations to a good *Reſolution*, we ought before we *reſolve*, to ſpend a conſiderable portion of time in the diligent Practice of *them*; and not to reſolve hand over head till we are duly and throughly prepared for it, till by exerciſing our *Faith* and *Conſideration*, &c. we have *broken* and *tamed* our perverſe and obſtinate Wills, and throughly perſuaded them to *part with* every Sin, and to *approve of*, and *conſent to* every Duty that is comprehended in a through Reſolution of Amendment. And if when we are about to *reſolve*, we find upon a ſtrict Examination any ſecret *Reſerve* or *Exception* in our Wills, if there be any Luſt which they are not throughly *perſuaded* to part with, or any Duty to which they are not fully *reconciled*, we ought for that time to forbear *reſolving*, and to go on in the Exerciſe of the *preparatory* Duties, till we find our reluctant Wills throughly *conquered* and *perſwaded* by them. For if there be any *leak* left open in our Reſolution for any Sin to creep in at, *that* will be ſure to inſinuate in the next *Storm* of temptation; and if it ſhould not let in *other* Sins after it, as 'tis a thouſand to one but it will, 'twill by its own *ſingle* Weight ſink us into eternal Perdition. Wherefore before ever we enter into the *Reſolution* of Amendment, we ought to be very careful that our Wills be throughly *prepared* for it; that they be reduced to a fair *Compliance* with the matter we are reſolving upon, and effectually *diſſwaded* out of all Reſolution to the contrary; and when this is done, we may

chearfully proceed to the forming of our good *Reſolution.*

Which ought to be performed by us, between God and our ſelves, with the greateſt *Serioufneſs* and *Solemnity.* For now our *Hearts* being ready, we are to betake our ſelves to our *Knees*, and in theſe, or ſuch like words, to devote our ſelves to God, *O thou bleſſed Author of my Being, I am now fully convinced that I owe my ſelf to thee by a thouſand Ties and Obligations, and am infinitely ſorry and aſhamed that I have ſo long ſequeſtred and withdrawn my ſelf from thee to ſerve my own baſe Luſts and Affections. Wherefore now in thy dread Preſence, and in that of thy holy Angels, I here entirely reſign up my ſelf unto thee, and do reſolve without any Reſerve or Exception that whatſoever Temptations I may meet with for the future, I will never wilfully withdraw or alienate my ſelf from thee more. From henceforth I heartily renounce all my Sins, and particularly thoſe that have been moſt dear and pleaſant to me, and do faithfully promiſe to continue thy true and loyal Subject as long as I breath, and that whatſoever Invitations I may have to the contrary, I will never revoke the Reſolution I now make, or any part of it. So help me, O my God.*

And having thus ſolemnly *reſolved*, it will be highly neceſſary that for the farther *Ratification* of it, we ſhould yet more ſolemnly repeat it in the *holy Sacrament*; wherein, according to the Cuſtom of *Feaſts* upon *Sacrifices*, God and every faithful Communicant do *mutually* re-oblige themſelves to one another, and upon the ſacred Symbols of the Body and Bloud of Jeſus do *ratifie* to each other each others Part of that everlaſting

Covenant

Covenant which by the Federal Rite of his meritorious Death and Sacrifice was inviolably *ſealed* and *confirmed*. So that when we take thoſe holy Elements into our hands, which the Prieſt in Gods ſtead preſents and offers to us, we do in effect make this ſolemn Dedication of our ſelves to God; *Here we offer and preſent unto thee, O Lord, our ſelves, our ſouls and bodies to be a reaſonable, holy and lively Sacrifice unto thee; and here we call to witneſs this ſacred Bloud that redeemed us, and thoſe vocal Wounds which do now interceed for us, that from henceforth we oblige our ſelves never to ſtart from thy ſervice, what Difficulties ſoever we may encounter in it, or what temptations ſoever we may have to forſake it.* And having thus reſolved and confirmed our Reſolutions by the Body and Bloud of our Saviour, and taken the Sacrament upon it not to depart from what we have reſolved, we have actually *liſted* and *ingaged* our ſelves in a warfare againſt Sin, the World, and the Devil, upon the final *Succeſs* whereof our everlaſting Fate depends. And thus you ſee what Duty is implied in the *Beginning* or *Entrance* of this *Warfaring* part of the Life of a Chriſtian.

SECT. II.

Wherein ſome Motives *are urged to* perſuade *men to the Practice of thoſe Duties that are proper to the* Beginning *of the* Chriſtian Warfare.

Having in the former Section given a brief Account of thoſe Duties which are neceſſary to the well *Beginning* of our *Chriſtian Warfare*, I ſhall

now, for a cloſe of that Argument endeavour to *preſs* and *perſuade* thoſe who have not as yet *begun*, to enter immediately upon it, by putting in practice theſe *Initial* Duties of it. You who have been hitherto *warring* againſt God, and *ſtriving* againſt your Duty and your Happineſs, be at laſt perſuaded to *make a Stand* for a while, and to *liſten* to the voice of Reaſon and Religion, which do both call aloud to you to *face about*, to *deſert* the Party wherein you are engaged, and *come* over to the Side of Virtue. And that I may, if poſſible, prevail, I do here earneſtly beſeech you, even by all that is *dear* and *precious* to you, by the Love of God, and by the Lives of your Souls, and by all your Hopes of Happineſs in the World to come, ſeriouſly to conſider with me theſe following *Motives*.

1. That there is a vaſt *Neceſſity* of beginning this our Spiritual Warfare *one time or other*.

2. That 'tis unſpeakably moſt *ſecure* and *advantagious* for us to begin it now.

3. That the *final Succeſs* of it doth very much depend upon the well *Beginning* of it.

4. That when once we have well *begun* it, the main *Difficulty* of it is conquered.

I. Conſider the vaſt *Neceſſity* there is of beginning this Spiritual Warfare *one time or other*. For that which is neceſſary for us to accompliſh *at laſt*, is neceſſary to be undertaken by us *one time or other*. Now it is as neceſſary for us to *oppoſe* and *vanquiſh* the Temptations of the World, and the Corruptions of our own Nature, as it is *not to go* to Hell, or *not to miſs* of Heaven. For in this great Battel

Battel the everlaſting Fate of our Souls is to be decided, and if we come off *Victors*, we are *made*, if *vanquiſhed*, we are *undone* to Eternity. So that in this Spiritual Warfare we do not contend like the Warriors of this world for a Triumphal Wreath that will *wither* upon our Brows, or for Fame and Renown which is nothing but the *Breath* of a company of *talking People*, or for the enlarging of our Empire over the next *handful* of a *Turf*; but we are contending with Enemies that are purſuing us to *Hell*, and binding us in Chains of *everlaſting Darkneſs*. We are to fight for our *Immortality*, for all our hopes of Happineſs and well-being in a *never-ending* Life; and when ſo much depends upon the Succeſs of our Conflict, and we muſt *conquer* and be *crowned*, or *die*; *win* the Field, and Heaven, or yield our ſelves *Captives* to eternal Miſery, I leave you to judge whether we are not obliged under the vaſteſt *Neceſſity* one time or other to *begin*. And if we muſt begin *one time or other*, why not *now* as well as *hereafter?* And to what purpoſe ſhould we *defer* entring upon that work, which we all confeſs we muſt *at laſt* not only *begin*, but *accompliſh?* For to have *accompliſhed* a neceſſary work, eſpecially when it is *difficult* and *important*, is a great *Satisfaction* to the Mind; and whereas while it is yet to *do*, the proſpect of the *pain* and *labour* of it creates in us a great deal of *Trouble* and *Anxiety*; when once it is *done*, or the main Difficulty of it is *over*, every Reflection on our paſt pains *ſweetens* our preſent Repoſe, and *crowns* it with Joy and Triumph. And thus it is in our *Entrance* into the *Chriſtian Life*, which we all confeſs to be both *neceſſary* and

difficult; and it being ſo, what do we elſe by our *delaying* it, but only *prolong* the pain and trouble of it? And whereas by one *brave* Attempt we might *eaſe* our ſelves, and ſet our Souls at *Reſt* for ever; we *languiſh* away our life in miſery, and are *ſick* with the Fear of our *Remedy*. Juſt like poor men that are under the torment of the *Stone*, they know they muſt be *cut* or *die*, but out of a frightful Apprehenſion of their Remedy they put it off *from time to time*; they promiſe they will *endure* it rather than *loſe* their Lives, but when they come to the Trial, their Hearts fail, and they muſt needs have a little longer Reſpite; but *all the while* they endure not only the *pain* of their *Diſeaſe*, but alſo the *Apprehenſions* of their *Cure*, which *at laſt* they muſt alſo actually *endure*, or *Death*, which is much more terrible to them. Whereas had they been cut *at firſt*, they might have ſaved themſelves all that Torment, and Fear of *farther* Torment, which they endured in the time of their *Delay*. And juſt thus it is with thoſe who *defer* their Repentance, which had they begun *at firſt* when they fell into their ſinful Courſes, their Hearts might have been at Eaſe a *great while* ago, and they might have ſaved themſelves all thoſe *Gripes* and *Twinges* of Conſcience, and all thoſe *painful* Apprehenſions of the Smart and Difficulty of repenting *at laſt*, which they have been forced to endure in the ſeveral periods of their Delay. But alas, Repentance is a *ſad* Remedy! Well, be it never ſo *ſad*, you know you muſt endure it, or that which is a thouſand times *worſe*. Why then you will endure it, that you are reſolved upon, but fain you would have a little *longer* Reſpite.

Ah

Ah fooliſh Souls! why will you *prolong* your Miſery, and *linger* out your Lives in Torment, whenas by enduring *now* what you muſt endure *at laſt*, you might be preſently at Eaſe, not only from the *Pain* of your *paſt* Guilt, but from the *Fear* of your *future* Repentance.

II. Conſider that 'tis unſpeakably more *ſecure* and *advantagious* for us to begin our Chriſtian Warfare *now*. For *this* Life is the only time of our Trial and Probation, the Field in which our ſpiritual Warfare is to be fought, and from which we muſt all go off triumphing *Conquerors*, or eternal *Slaves*. And alas ſuch a *ſlippery* and *uncertain* thing is this our preſent Exiſtence, that there is no one part of it we can call *our own*, but what is preſent. For all our *Futurity* is in Gods Hand and Diſpoſal, and how he will *ſhorten* or *prolong* it we are not able to prognoſticate. So that for ought we know the next moment may finally determine our everlaſting Fate, and the Hopes of Eternity which are now in our hands may ſlip through our fingers before to morrow morning, and leave us deſperate for ever. What a dreadful Venture therefore do thoſe men run, that *delay* from time to time the *ſecuring* their Salvation by a timely Repentance? When 'tis *now* in their own Power, would they but lay hold on the *preſent* Opportunity, to ſecure their Victory and Crown, they rather chuſe to go to *croſs or pile* for them, and to ſtake them upon a Contingency that is not in their Power to diſpoſe of.

But ſuppoſe they could ſecure that *hereafter* to themſelves, to which they do ſo venturouſly defer their

their Repentance, yet ſtill there is another Venture of which they can *never* be ſecure, and that is, whether when that *hereafter* comes, God will not out of a juſt Reſentment of their preſent Deſpite to, and Contempt of his Grace *withdraw* it from them. Which if he ſhould, they would be left in as great an incapacity of repenting, as if he had withdrawn their *Lives* from them; it being as poſſible for us to repent without *Life* when we are *dead*, as without Gods *Grace* while we are *living*. So that promiſing that we will repent hereafter, we promiſe not only for *our ſelves*, but for *God* too; we promiſe that *he* ſhall wait *our* leiſure, and dance Attendance after us through all the tedious Stages of our Delays and Procraſtinations; that he ſhall tamely put up all thoſe Affronts and Provocations which between *this* and our *hereafter* we are reſolved to offer him, and in the end be as much at our beck, and as ready to come in to our Aſſiſtance, when we ſhall think fit to call for him, as if we had never given him the leaſt Offence or Provocation to the contrary. For unleſs we can ſecure our ſelves of this, it will be every whit as uncertain whether we *repent* hereafter if we *live*, as whether we *live* to hereafter to *repent*. And what a madneſs is it for men that have now their Lives and Souls in their own hands, to ſtake and venture them upon two ſuch contingent Iſſues, that are both of them ſo far out of their Power and Diſpoſal?

But ſuppoſe there were no Hazard in either of theſe, that we were as ſecure both of our own *Lives* and Gods *Grace*, as we are of the preſent Moment, yet we can never hope to begin our Chriſti-

Chriſtian warfare ſo *advantagiouſly* as *now*. For all the time we are deferring it, our Enemies are gathering Strength, and muſtering up their Forces againſt us; our bad Inclinations are *ripening* and *improving*, and our evil Habits are growing more *inveterate*; and ſo many Degrees of Strength as *theſe* get, *we* loſe; and ſo proportionably as their power to *offend* us increaſes, ours to *defend* our ſelves againſt them decreaſes. What a madneſs therefore is it for men, who pretend to be reſolved to ingage in the Chriſtian warfare, to *defer* it as they do from time to time, when they cannot but be ſenſible, if they take any notice of themſelves, how much every further Delay *improves* their *Luſts*, and *impairs* their *Reaſon*, how it *fortifies* their Enemy, and *weakens* themſelves. You ſay you are convinced of the *Neceſſity* of this warfare, and *reſolved* to undertake it *one time or other*, though *as yet* you cannot prevail with your ſelves to enter upon it. And why not yet? why for ſome reaſon or other forſooth you find your ſelves averſe to it; and do you imagine that if you are averſe to it *to day*, you will be leſs averſe to it *to morrow* or *next* day? No, fond Men, do not abuſe your ſelves, for if you will not enter upon it *now*, be aſſured of this, you will never find your ſelves either ſo *willing* to it, or ſo *fit* and *able* for it again as long as you live. For your Luſts will grow every day dearer and dearer to you, and ſo *twine* and *wrap* themſelves by degrees about your Hearts and Affections, that you will every day find your ſelves more and more unwilling to part with them; and at laſt they will *cling* ſo faſt, that there will be no pulling them from ye with-

without pulling away your Souls with them. Wherefore talk no more, I beſeech you, of repenting *hereafter*, but reſolve once for all, that you will repent *now or never*.

III. Conſider the *final Succeß* of this your ſpiritual Warfare doth very much depend upon your *well beginning* of it. By what hath been ſaid you plainly ſee, there is an abſolute Neceſſity of beginning it *one time or other*, and that you can never begin it ſo *ſecurely* and *advantagiouſly* as *now*; but unleſs you begin it *well* now, that is, with a through Preparation of Heart, you were e'en as good ſit ſtill and not begin *at all*. For when once you come to the Trial, to encounter the Oppoſitions of a corrupt Nature, and contend with the Difficulties of a holy Life, you will then quickly find your ſappy Reſolutions ſink, and like ſo many rotten Banks yield and give way at every ſpring-tide of Temptation. But as the well laying the *Foundations* of a houſe ſecures the *Superſtructures* againſt the violences of all future ſtorms and foul weather, ſo the firſt ſetling of your Reſolution upon a *firm* and *ſtedfaſt* Baſis will be a mighty Safeguard to it againſt all enſuing Storms of Temptation. That well-grounded *Faith* and through *Conſideration* which induced us to it, will go along with it, and guard it through the Enemies Quarters with ſuch invincible Reaſons as no ſinful Motive will be able to diſprove or cope with. That hearty *Shame* and bitter *Sorrow* and *Regret* which we felt in the forming our Reſolution will animate and render it more firm and inexorable againſt all the Solicitations of ſin for the future. Thoſe fervent and earneſt *Prayers* which

which preceded and accompanied it, will not only ingage *us* to take the more *care* and *regard* of it, but ingage *God* alſo to contribute more *aid* and *aſſiſtance* to it in all its enſuing Conflicts and Encounters. And when in the framing of our Reſolution we have taken effectual care before-hand not to reſolve *upon* any thing but what we have conſidered the *difficulty* of, or *againſt* any thing but what we have felt the *ſhame* and *ſmart* of, or upon any *Reaſon*, but what we have throughly *pondered*, and do firmly *believe*, and together with all this, have ingaged by our earneſt *Prayers* the God of all Grace to aid and aſſiſt us, we may with ſome aſſurance promiſe our ſelves a bleſſed *Iſſue* and Succeſs. For now we are *forewarned* of, and *forearmed* againſt all that can happen to us in our ſpiritual Warfare; now there is no Difficulty can ariſe in our way which we did not *foreſee* and *provide againſt* when we firſt ſet forward to Heaven. So that if from henceforth we do but take an honeſt care to watch the Motions of our Enemy, and to keep up our own Hearts and Courage, we cannot miſs of a glorious *Victory*, and after that an everlaſting *Triumph*.

But if we make a *raſh* Beginning, and reſolve *precipitantly* without obſerving the above-named Rules and Directions, in all probability our *haſty* Purpoſes will end in a *leiſurely* Repentance. So that unleſs we intend to take a great deal of pains in Religion to no purpoſe, to weave a *Penelope*'s Web, and *do* and *undo* as long as we live, and only to dance round in an eternal Circle of *ſinning* and *reſolving againſt* it, *reſolving* and *ſinning* again, without ever making a ſtep *forward*, but ſtill *wheeling*

wheeling about to the same Point; let us now at last resolve to *begin* in that *prudent* Method which God hath prescribed us.

IV. Consider that when once we have *begun* it *well*, we have conquered the *main* Difficulty of this our spiritual warfare. For though it be an easie matter to begin *ill*, to resolve against our sins in a *sudden* Pet, or *transient* Heat of Passion; yet it must be confessed that to resolve *well* and *wisely*, that is, with that firm *Belief* and through *Consideration* of things, with that *Shame* and *Sorrow* and those earnest *Cries* to Heaven for Aid and Assistance, which are necessary to the founding of a *strong* and *lasting* Resolution, is not so easie a matter. For in all those preparatory Exercises, we have a *roving* mind, a *hard* Heart, and a *perverse* Nature to contend with; and we shall find it a very hard matter to call in our *wandering* Thoughts, and unite them together into a *fixt* and *steady* Consideration of the Evidences of the Truth of Religion, and of the Duties and Motives and Difficulties of it. And whilst we are entertaining them with this *unwonted* Argument, there are a thousand Objects with which they are better *acquainted* that will be calling them away; so that without a great deal of Violence to our selves we shall never be able to keep them *together* so long, as is necessary to the forming a firm *Assent* to the *Truth*, and the passing a true and impartial *Judgment* upon the *Proposals* of Religion. And when we have fixt our Thoughts into a serious Consideration of the *Evidences* of Religion, we shall find that our *Lusts* will object much more against them than our *Reason*; that

they

they will be caſting *miſts* before our Eyes and *bribing* and *biaſſing* our Underſtanding the other way, and that thereupon 'twill be more difficult than we are aware to convince our ſelves throughly of the truth of a Religion that is ſo diametrically oppoſite to our vicious Inclinations. But when this is done and we proceed to conſider the *Duties* of Religion, and to balance the Motives with the Difficulties of them, in order to the obtaining of our ſelves a *full* and *free* Conſent to them; here again we ſhall find our ſelves at a mighty Plunge. For though the Motives to our Duty are at firſt View infinitely *greater* and more *conſiderable* than the Difficulties of it; though it be unſpeakably more *intolerable* to loſe the Joys of Heaven, and incur the Pains of Hell than to endure the *ſharpeſt* Brunts of this Spiritual warfare; yet *theſe* being *preſent* and *ſenſible* have a more Immediate Acceſs to us, and conſequently are apter to move us than either of thoſe Motives which are both of them *future* and *inviſible*. So that unleſs we do earneſtly *preſs* and *urge* our ſelves with *thoſe* Motives, and imprint them upon our minds in the moſt *lively* and *real* Characters, we ſhall find our ſelves overruled in deſpight of them by *theſe* preſent and ſenſible Difficulties that are before us. But when we have *effectually* convinced our ſelves that thoſe Difficulties of our Duty are much leſs conſiderable than the Motives to them, we ſhall find it a hard Task to perſuade our Wills into a *free* and *explicite* Conſent to all the *Particulars* of it. For now we ſhall find a ſtrong *Averſation* in our Natures to *ſundry* of thoſe Duties that call for our *Approbation*, and there will be a mighty Counterſtriving

ſtriving between our *Reaſon* and *Inclinations*. Our darling Luſts, thoſe boſom Orators within us, will now employ all their Rhetorick to diſſuade us from parting with them; they will *claſp* about our Souls, like *departing* Lovers, and uſe all their *Charms* and *Allurements* to hold us faſt, and reconcile themſelves to us; and under theſe Circumſtances, though we have all the reaſon in the world on our ſide, we ſhall find it will be no ſuch eaſie matter effectually to diſpoſe our Wills to *cloſe* with ſo many *offenſive* Duties, and *part* with ſo many *beloved* Sins. But when *this* is done, which to be ſure will coſt us many a violent *Struggle* and *Contention* with our ſelves, there are *other* Difficulties to be maſtered. For now we muſt *reflect* upon our paſt ill Life, and expoſe it to our own Eyes in all its natural *Horrour*, *Turpitude*, and *Infamy*, and never leave *reproaching* our ſelves with the *Foulneſs* and *Diſingenuity*, the *Madneſs* and *Folly* of it, till we find our hearts affected with *Shame* and *Sorrow* for, and *Indignation* againſt it. And for us that have been ſo long uſed to *cokes* and *flatter* our ſelves, to *paint* and *varniſh* our Deformities, and crown our Brows with *forced* and *undeſerved* Applauſes; for *us* to *condemn* and *upbraid* our ſelves, to ſtrip our Actions of all their *artificial* Beauty, and ſet our ſelves before our own Eyes in all our *naked*, *undiſguiſed* Uglineſs, and not look off till we have lookt our ſelves into *Shame* and *Horrour* and *Hatred* of our ſelves, will be, at firſt eſpecially, a very *ungrateful* Employment; and yet it may be a good while perhaps before our *hard* and *unmalleable* Hearts will yield to the impreſſions of *Godly Sorrow* and *Remorſe*. But when this

this Difficulty is conquered, our Work is not yet *totally* finiſhed. For now we muſt *come off* from our ſelves and all our *preſumptuous* Dependences upon our own Ability and Power, and in a deep ſence of our own moſt wretched *Weakneſs* and *Impotency* throw our ſelves wholly upon God, and with *earneſt* and *importunate* Outcries implore his gracious Aid and Aſſiſtance. And let me tell ye, to men that have been all along inured to ſuch *glorious* Conceits of themſelves, ſuch *mighty* Confidences in their own Abilities; that have promiſed themſelves from time to time that at *ſuch* and *ſuch* a time they would repent and amend, as if without Gods help 'twere in *their* Power to repent when they *pleaſed*; for ſuch men as theſe, I ſay, to come out of themſelves and their own *ſelf-confidences*, and wholly caſt themſelves upon a foreign Help; ſo ſenſibly to *feel*, and ingenuouſly to *own* their own Inability, as to fly to God, and confeſs themſelves *loſt* and *undone* without him, is a much harder matter than we can well imagine till we come to make the Experiment. And yet this, all *this*, muſt be done before we can be well prepared to *reſolve* upon the Chriſtian Warfare.

This I have the longer inſiſted on, becauſe I would deal *plainly* with you, and ſhew you the *worſt* of things. For whether you are told of it or no, you will find it, if ever you make the Experiment, that all your good *Reſolutions* without theſe *Preparations* will ſoon unravel in the *Execution*; and that after you have reſolv'd a thouſand times over you will be juſt where you are, and not one ſtep farther in Religion. But for your Encou-

ragement, know that when with *theſe* neceſſary Preparations you have *ſolemnized* your Reſolution, you have won the *main* and *toughest* Victory in all your ſpiritual Warfare; a Victory by which you have *pulled down* your Sin from its Throne, and *broken* and *diſarrayed* its Power and Forces; ſo that now you are upon the purſuit of a *flying* Enemy, and if you do but diligently *follow* your Blow, and *purſue* your brave Reſolution through all Temptations to the contrary, and do not ſuffer your vanquiſhed Enemy to *rally* and *reinforce* himſelf againſt ye, you will ſenſibly perceive his Strength decay; and thoſe Luſts which ſeemed at firſt *invincible*, will languiſh away by degrees from *weak* to *weaker*, till at laſt they expire into the Habits of their contrary Virtues; and ſo proportionably thoſe Virtues which through our vicious Averſations to them ſeemed at firſt *impoſſible*, will grow on by degrees from *poſſible* to *eaſie*, and from *eaſie* to *neceſſary*; and then the *Sins* will be more impoſſible to us than the *Virtues*.

Now what a mighty Encouragement is this to make a *good Beginning* of the Chriſtian Warfare, that in ſo doing we are ſure to conquer the *main* Difficulty of it; that when we have broke through all thoſe Oppoſitions that lie in the way to a wiſe and good Reſolution, we are paſt the *Frontiers* of Religion, and having gotten over thoſe ſteep *Alps*, at its Entrance ſhall be ſure to find the Region round about a plain and eaſie *Champain*, in which the further we go, the *ſmoother* 'twill be, and ſo ſmoother and ſmoother till at laſt 'twill be all *ſweet* and *delightful*, like the flowry Walks of Paradiſe.

Paradiſe. Let us therefore be perſwaded, without any farther Delay, to enter *immediately* upon this our holy Warfare, and by *Faith* and *Conſideration*, &c. to lay the Foundations of a religious Reſolution; that ſo when we are *actually* ingaged againſt our ſpiritual Enemies we may be able to *ſtand our ground* againſt all Temptations, and that having finally *conquered* and *ſubdued* them, we may receive that Immortal Crown which God the righteous Judge hath laid up for the *victorious*.

And ſo I have done with the *Firſt* Part of our *Chriſtian Warfare*, viz. our *Entrance* into it.

SECT. III.

Concerning the Second *Part of the* Chriſtian Warfare; *with a particular Account of the Duties thereunto appertaining.*

I Shall now proceed to the *Second* Part of our *Chriſtian Warfare*, viz. the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of it, which conſiſts in *holy living*. For when once we have reduced our Wills to a *firm* and *well-grounded* Reſolution of *entring* into this militant State, that which is next incumbent upon us is to *purſue* our Reſolution in the future Courſe of our Lives and Actions, that is, to *abſtain* from all Sin, and endeavour to *mortifie* our Inclination to it, and to *practiſe* all the contrary Graces and Virtues, and endeavour to *improve* them to farther and farther degrees of perfection; or as the Scripture expreſſes it, to *ceaſe to do evil*, and to

learn to do well; to *ſtrive* againſt Sin, and to *die* to it, and to *grow in grace* and *perfect holineſs in the fear of God*. In this conſiſts the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our *Chriſtian Warfare*. In order whereunto it's indiſpenſably neceſſary that we ſhould ſtill *repeat* the Practice of thoſe Duties by which we were firſt *prepared* to enter into it: all thoſe means by which our good Reſolution was *produced*, being naturally conducive to *maintain* and *ſupport* it. And therefore we find that *Faith* and *Conſideration*, &c. are not enjoyned as *temporary* Duties, that are only to be practiſed in the *Beginning* of our Warfare, but as means that will be *always* neceſſary for us throughout our whole *Progreſs* to Heaven. For ſo we are commanded not only to *acquire* a ſincere Faith or Belief of the Goſpel, but to *continue* and *be eſtabliſhed in it*, Col. i. 23. compared with Cap. ii. 7. And ſo again we are enjoyned not only to *admit* the propoſals of Religion into our Conſideration, but to *keep them* there, *Luke* viii. 15. and ſuffer them *to dwell richly in us*, Col. iij. 16. And ſo for all thoſe other preparatory Duties. For that from a hearty Conviction of our need of Chriſt we ſhould beg all Mercies of God in his *Name*, and for his *ſake*, is a ſtanding Precept of Chriſtian Devotion, *John* xvi. 24. and ſo is alſo *Confeſſion* of our ſins to God, 1 *John* i. 9. and *Prayer* for his Grace and Aſſiſtance, *Col.* iv. 2. Nor is it only required that we ſhould *once* repent or change our bad Reſolution for a good one, but that we ſhould alſo *repeat* and *confirm* our good Reſolution; that we ſhould *ſtabliſh our hearts*, that is, keep our Wills *fixed* and *determined* to all good Intentions and

and Purpoſes, *James* v. 8. and *ſtand faſt in the Lord*, that is, adhere to the Profeſſion and Practice of Chriſtianity with a *firm* and *conſtant* Reſolution, *Phil.* iv. 1. For to *proceed* in our Chriſtian Warfare, is *conſtantly* to live up to our good Reſolution which will require a continued Application of thoſe means by which we were firſt *prepared* and *diſpoſed* to enter into it. Thus Faith is no leſs neceſſary to inable us to *perform*, than it was to prepare us to *make* our good Reſolution; and ſtill the more we *believe* our Religion, the more we ſhall think our ſelves concerned in its propoſals, and conſequently the more firmly we ſhall be reſolved to *cloſe with*, and *embrace* them; and ſo ſtill as our Faith *improves* in degrees of Certainty, our Reſolution will proportionably *grow* ſtronger and ſtronger. Again, if it were neceſſary to the *Birth* of our Reſolution that we ſhould firſt duly *weigh* and *conſider* the Motives and the Difficulties of the Duties we were reſolving on, then it will be no leſs neceſſary to the *Growth* and *Improvement* of it, that we ſhould frequently conſider over theſe Motives and Difficulties *again*, and balance them one againſt another. And at firſt eſpecially, while our good Reſolution is yet in its *Infancy*, it will be very neceſſary that we ſhould every day before we go abroad into the World ſpend ſome portion of Time in *fore-thinking* of the many Temptations that do lie in wait for us, whether in our *Buſineſs* or *Company*, or neceſſary *Refreſhments* and *Diverſions*; and *fore-arming* our ſelves againſt them with the Motives and Arguments of our Religion; that ſo we may have our Weapons ready when ever they ſhall aſſault us, and be

always provided to reſiſt them. Again, if it were neceſſary to the *forming* our Reſolution, that we ſhould be *convinced* of the Neceſſity and Reality of our Saviours *Mediation*, then it will be no leſs neceſſary to the *performance* of it that our Hope and Fear, which are the Springs of our Action, ſhould ſtill be excited by the *glorious* Aſſurance of Mercy and *horrid* Proſpect of Sin which this *Conviction* implies. Once more, was it neceſſary to the *well making* of our Reſolution, that we ſhould affect our ſelves before-hand with a hearty *Shame* and *Sorrow* for our paſt Tranſgreſſions, then will it be no leſs neceſſary for the *ſtrengthening* and *confirming* it, that we ſhould ever and anon *revive* this our Shame and Grief, by reflecting on the Filthineſs of our *paſt* State, and the Weakneſs and Imperfection of our *preſent*, and by an ingenuous *Confeſſion* of both to the high and holy God; that ſo our *Shame* and *Sorrow* for our Sins being digeſted into *Anger* and *Diſpleaſure*, may ſharpen our Reſolution, and *animate* it more and more againſt them. In ſhort, if it be neceſſary to the *founding* of our Reſolution, that we ſhould firſt earneſtly *implore* the divine Grace and Aſſiſtance, then it will be no leſs neceſſary for the *continuance* of it, that for the ſame purpoſe we ſhould continually apply our ſelves to the Throne of Grace; that we ſhould every Morning commit our ſelves to Gods Grace and Protection, and never preſume to venture among the Snares of the World without him; that we ſhould count it as unſafe for us to go out of our Chambers without being armed with Gods Aid, as 'tis to ruſh *naked* into a Battel amongſt Swords and Spears: In a word, that we

ſhould

ſhould every Morning and Evening *at leaſt*, recommend our ſelves to God, and beſeech him to defend us againſt all thoſe *Terrors* and *Allurements* which either the *Devil* or our own *Luſts* ſhall propoſe to withdraw us from our good Reſolution. And if upon all theſe preparatory Exerciſes of our *Faith*, *Conſideration*, &c. it was at firſt neceſſary for us to enter into a ſolemn *Reſolution*, it will be no leſs neceſſary that with the ſame continued Preparations we ſhould frequently *iterate* and *renew* it; eſpecially *at firſt*, till the Strength of our bad Inclinations is in ſome meaſure *broken* and *abated*. Now we ſhould take care to go every day out of our Chambers *freſh* armed, as men that expect an Enemy at the Threſhold; and not to truſt our *weak* Souls among the Temptations of the World till we have firſt *chained* up our Inclinations with *new* Vows of fidelity. So that you ſee the Duties of our *Entrance* into the Chriſtian Warfare are not ſo *peculiar* to that State, but that they are alſo to be practiſed in the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of it.

But then beſides *theſe*, there are ſundry *others* that are neceſſary to our ſucceſsful *Progreſs* therein. All which I ſhall reduce to theſe following Heads:

1. That we take care to arm our ſelves with *Patience* and *Courage* to undergo and encounter the *Trouble* and *Difficulty* of it.

2. That we *propoſe* to our ſelves the moſt excellent *Examples*.

3. That we apply our ſelves to our *Spiritual Guides* for Direction.

4. That we be very curious of our *Aims* and *Intentions*.

5. That we ſhould poſſeſs our minds with a *lively* Senſe and *awful* Apprehenſion of Gods *Preſence* with, and *Inſpection* over us.

6. That we frequently *examine* and *review* our own Actions.

7. That we be very *watchful* and *circumſpect* in the *Conduct* and *Management* of our ſelves.

8. That we ſhould betake our ſelves to ſome *honeſt Calling*, and behave our ſelves *diligently* and *induſtriouſly* therein.

9. That we ſhould endeavour after a *chearful* Frame of Spirit.

10. That we ſhould maintain in our minds a conſtant *Senſe* and *Expectation* of *Heaven*.

11. That we ſhould live in the conſtant uſe of the *external Ordinances* and *Inſtitutions* of our Religion.

I. To the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Chriſtian Warfare, it is neceſſary that we arm our ſelves with *Patience* and *Courage* to undergo and encounter the *Troubles* and *Difficulties* of it. For ſo we are commanded to *be ſtrong in the Lord*, Epheſ. vi. 10. and *to be ſtrong in the grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Tim. ii. 1. that is, to *fortifie* our ſelves with the Grace of God and the Motives of Religion againſt all thoſe *Hardſhips* and *Oppoſitions* which may riſe up againſt us in our March to Heaven; for we are aſſured before-hand that *we have need of patience that after we have done the will of God we may receive the Promiſe*, Heb. x. 36. and therefore we are bid to *ſtrengthen our ſelves with all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs*, Col. i. 11.

and

and *to run with patience the race that is ſet before us*, Heb. xii. 1.

For though it is certain that when we have well and wiſely *reſolved*, the *greateſt* Difficulty of our ſpiritual Warfare is over, yet it cannot be diſſembled that even when this is *performed*, and we proceed from hence to *Execution*, there will, *at firſt* eſpecially, ariſe ſuch Difficulties and Oppoſitions in our way as will ſufficiently try our *Courage* and *Patience*. And though if when we were forming our Reſolution we conſidered the whole matter, we could not but *foreſee* great Difficulties in the Execution of it, and be very ſenſible what ſtrong Inclinations from *within* and Temptations from *without* we were to *ſtruggle* and *contend* with; yet alas the Difficulties of all Undertakings are uſually much leſs in our *Foreſight*, than in our *Senſe* and *Experience* of them. For while they are in our Foreſight we have only the *Notions* and *Ideas* of them to encounter, and theſe being not ſo ſtubborn as *the things themſelves* are much more eaſily conquered by us. So that when inſtead of our own *eaſie* and *compliant* Notions we come to contend with the Difficulties *themſelves*, we very often find the Face of things quite *changed*, and thoſe Difficulties which did ſo eaſily *ſubmit* to our *Apprehenſions*, do many times make an obſtinate *Reſiſtance* to our *Endeavours*. And thus many times it is in the matter in hand. So that when we are *fore-caſting* the Difficulties of Religion in our Minds, we muſt always allow for the *Diſtance* of them which uſually *leſſens* their Appearance, and conclude with our ſelves that when we are *actually* ingaged with them we *find* them much

much more *stiff* and *incompliant* to our *Endeavours* than they are now to our *Thoughts*; and accordingly *prepare* and *arm* our selves against them. For when from *considering* we proceed to *encounter* them, we must expect to find that to *discourse* and *execute* are things of a widely different nature; and that those Difficulties which we so easily *vanquished* in our thoughts and Discourses, will when we are actually *contending* with them put us to a much harder Trial of our *Valour* and *Constancy* than we were aware of.

For if we should have nothing but our own bad Inclinations and the Ordinary Temptations of the World to struggle with, yet even *these* we shall find sufficient to exercise our utmost *Patience* and *Constancy*. For we must not expect that our bad Inclinations, especially after they have been *pampered* and *improved* by a long and frequent Repetition of *forbidden* Enjoyments, will be presently *subdued* and *mortified*, when there are so many Temptations all around us continually *exciting* and *provoking* them. No, you may be assured they will *struggle* for their lives before they give up the Ghost, and if they are deeply radicated, will not be torn from their Roots without a great deal of *Time* and *Labour*. So that unless you have a *great* stock of Patience and Courage to *endure* and *outstand* their tedious Resistances to your pious Endeavours, and to deny them those vicious satisfactions which they *feed* and *live* upon, till you have *starved* them out; you will quickly be *weary* of contending with them, and rather chuse to yield them their *Desires*, than be plagued with their restless *Importunities*.

But

But then beſides theſe *ordinary* Difficulties of denying your ſinful Deſires and Inclinations, it may be your Lot to *take up the Croſs* too, and to follow your Saviour through a dark Lane of *Sufferings* and *Perſecutions*; and then you will need a *world* of Patience and Courage to undergo all that *Shame* and *Reproach*, *Loſs* and *Pain*, *Fear* and *Suffering*, through which you muſt fight your way to Heaven if ever you come there. Since therefore this *may* happen to ye, and is not altogether *unlikely*, it concerns ye, as ye hope for Heaven, to *fore-arm* and *prepare* your ſelves againſt it. So that our Chriſtian Warfare expoſing us, as it doth, to ſo many *certain* and *probable* Difficulties, it is not without reaſon that the Apoſtle exhorts us to be *ſtedfaſt and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as we know that our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

II. To the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Chriſtian Warfare it is neceſſary that we *propoſe* to our ſelves the moſt excellent *Examples*. For experience tells us, that good *Example* hath a ſtronger Influence upon men than good *Precepts* or *Counſels*; and the reaſon is plain, becauſe he that only gives others good Advices or Inſtructions doth not give them that Security that he believes *himſelf*, as he that *ſeconds* his Counſel with his own Example. For they who are inſtructed, do in a great meaſure depend upon the Judgment and Authority of their Teachers, and therefore muſt have a reaſonable *Security* that their Teachers do believe *themſelves* before they will be induced to *believe* and *comply* with what they are taught; and ſuch a Security

is

is not to be fetcht ſo much from their *Words* as from their Actions. But when by their Examples they *tranſcribe* their own Doctrines, it is viſible they are *in earneſt*, and that is a probable Argument to their Diſciples that their Doctrine is *true*. So that good Example teaches with greater *Force* and *Authority* than good Doctrine can do, becauſe it more *ſenſibly* confirms what it teaches, and doth at the ſame time *direct* us *what* to do, and by a very popular Argument *prove* that we *ought* to do it. Beſides, when the matter which the Teacher adviſes or enjoyns is *hard* and *difficult*, he ought, for the Encouragement of thoſe whom he teaches, to give them a full Aſſurance that 'tis *practicable*; which no Argument will ſo *effectually* do as his own Example. For when they ſee that he himſelf *practiſes* what he *teaches*, that is an *ocular* Demonſtration to them that 'tis *practicable*. So that good Example carries in it this ſtrong Encouragement to Goodneſs, that there is nothing in it but what is *poſſible*, and that the greateſt Difficulties that attend it are ſuch as may be *conquered* by Diligence and ſincere Endeavour. And as it gives us the moſt *ſenſible* Direction and Encouragement to Virtue, ſo it alſo repreſents it to us to the greateſt *Advantage*. And whereas Precepts and Diſcourſes of Virtue are only the *Pictures* and *artificial* Deſcriptions of it, a virtuous Example is Virtue *animated* and expoſed to our view in all its *living* Charms and Attractions. And therefore by how much Nature *exceeds* Art, and the moſt accompliſhed Beauties *excel* their Statues and Pictures, by ſo much is Virtue in Examples more *amiable* and *attractive* than in Precepts and Diſcourſes.

courſes. Since therefore in good Examples we ſee Virtue *alive* and *in Motion*, exerting it ſelf in the moſt *comely* Actions and *graceful* Geſtures, this muſt much more effectually *recommend* and *endear* it to our Minds and Affections than the moſt *preſſing* Diſcourſes or *lively* Deſcriptions of it.

This therefore is one of thoſe great means of holy living which the Goſpel hath preſcribed us, *viz.* that we ſhould propoſe to our ſelves the beſt and moſt excellent Examples; that *we ſhould be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the Promiſes*, Heb. vi. 12. and that we ſhould be *followers* of the Apoſtles and Leaders of the Flock of Chriſt, as *they were of Chriſt himſelf*, 1 Cor. xi. 1. But becauſe the Examples of the *beſt* of Men have a great many imperfections in them, and are very often intermixt either with *Exceſſes* or *Defects*, and tainted with *Superſtition* or *Enthuſiaſm*, by reaſon whereof they frequently miſlead thoſe that tread too cloſe upon the heels of them; therefore we are more particularly directed to the Example of the great Maſter of our Religion; which though it conſiſts of an *unſpotted* Innocence and *perfect* Virtue, yet is every way *accommodated* to the State and Condition of humane Nature and Converſation. For he converſed among men with a *modeſt* Virtue, and ſuch as was every way conſiſtent with an *ordinary* Courſe of life. His Piety was *even*, and *conſtant*, and *unblameable*, but ſuch as fairly *complied* with *civil* Society and a *ſecular* Converſation. It affected not high *Tranſports*, and *Raptures* of Devotion, but was ſuch as was both *fit* and *eaſie* for Mortals

to

to imitate. His Virtue conſiſted not in *prodigious* Faſtings, or *ſour* and *unpracticable* Abſtractions from Senſe, but in a life of *Juſtice* and *Temperance*, of *Humility* and *Charity* and *Patience*, and the like; that is, in ſuch a life as is not only *proper*, but *poſſible* for us to tranſcribe. So that in his glorious Example he hath tranſmitted to us an *imitable* Virtue; for he took care not to *out-run* the Capacities of Men in imitable Expreſſions of Sanctity and Virtue, but ſo far as he could *innocently*, *complied* with our Weakneſs, and *kept pace* with our Strength; that ſo he might entertain us all along with the Comforts of his *Company*, and the Influence of a perpetual *Guide*. And as that Rule of Faith which he hath propounded to us, is fitted to our Underſtandings, being very *ſhort*, *eaſie*, and *intelligible*; ſo, as an excellent Writer of our own hath obſerved, that Copy of Manners which he hath ſet before us, is not only fitted with Excellencies *worthy*, but alſo with Compliances *poſſible* to be imitated by us.

And as his Example is all *imitable*, ſo it is all throughout *ſubſtantially* good. For it conſiſted in a *modeſt* Piety, a *ſimple* and *unaffected* Goodneſs. His Devotions to God never affected the *Stage*, nor did they ever evaporate in *Enthuſiaſtick* Rants, or *unaccountable* Raptures of Paſſion, but were always *ſecret* and *ſerious*, *calm* and *manly*, animated with a *ſeraphick* Fervour, and yet conducted with *Reaſon* and *Sobriety*. His Government of himſelf was *exact* and *regular*, his Affections were always fixt to their proper *Objects*, and never exceeded the juſt *Limits* of Reaſon; and his *Appetites* were always moderated by his *Underſtanding*, and

and never tranſgreſſed the bounds of *Temperance* and *Nature*. His Converſation among men was moſt *innocent* and *candid*, *free* and *ingenuous*; neither *vain* nor *moroſe*, *haughty* nor *ſordid*, but equally poiſed between all Extremes. He was *juſt* without Partiality, *humble* without Affectation, *charitable* and *beneficent* without Noiſe or Reſpect of Perſons. His Zeal was *wiſe*, *temperate*, and *ſubſtantial*, ſuch as did not ſpend it ſelf in a furious *Contention* for, or *Oppoſition* to things of an indifferent Nature, but it quietly ſubmitted to the Cuſtoms of his Country and of the Church in which he was born and educated; and all his Invectives were againſt *Hypocriſie* and *Immorality*, which were the only things to which his noble and generous Temper could never be reconciled. In a word, his whole Religion was *modeſt* and *ſerious*, and affected rather to be *ſeen* than to be *heard*, and to *be* than to be *ſeen*. His Heavenly-mindedneſs was ſuch as rendred him neither too *ſour*, nor too *talkative*; and his Patience was always equally diſtant from *Stupidity* and *Effeminacy*. For ſo when he endured that miſerable Death of the Croſs, he ſuffered like a Man that was *ſenſible* of Pain, and yet very well knew how to *undergo* it as *became* him. For as on the one hand he did not breath out his Soul like an *effeminate* Epicure, in *whining* Complaints and *wretched* Lamentations; ſo neither on the other hand did he give up the Ghoſt like a *ſtanting* Stoick in a *huffing* Contempt of death, or an *affected* Inſenſibility of Pain and Miſery. But from the beginning to the end he acted his Part in that bloudy Tragedy, as one that was neither *inſenſible* of Torment, nor

conque-

conquered by it. For the laſt words which he breathed, which were a hearty Prayer for his Murderers, manifeſted his Soul to be *calm* and *ſerene* under all the Agonies of his Body. Thus is his great Example intirely compoſed of thoſe excellent Virtues, that are the proper Graces and Ornaments of humane Nature. Now though there be ſome Actions of our Saviours Life which were never intended for our *Imitation*, *viz.* ſuch wherein he either *exerciſed*, or *proved* and *aſſerted* his divine Authority; yet whatſoever he did of preciſe *Morality*, and in purſuance to his own *Laws*, he *deſigned* and *intended* for our Imitation. So that in all ſuch matters; as his *Law* is to be our *Map* and *Rule*; ſo his *Practice* is to be our *Guide* and *Preſident*.

For this is the great End of our Religion, to which God hath *predeſtinated* us, namely, to be *conformable to the Image of his Son*, Rom. viii. 29. and in this conſiſts our *putting on of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, namely in *imitating* his Manners, and *following* the Garb and Faſhion of his Converſation; and accordingly our Saviour tells his Diſciples, *John* xiii. 15. *I have given you an example* (that is of Humility and Charity) *that you ſhould do as I have done to you*; and 'tis one of his great Commands that we ſhould *learn of him who was meek and lowly of heart*, with a promiſe that in ſo doing, *we ſhould find reſt unto our Souls*, Matt. xi. 29.

Wherefore if we would lead a holy Life, purſuant to our holy Reſolution, we muſt ſet holy Examples before our Eyes, and eſpecially that moſt holy one of our bleſſed Saviour. We muſt *peruſe* the Hiſtory of his ſacred Life, and diligently *obſerve*

obſerve his Carriage and Demeanour in all thoſe Capacities and Circumſtances wherein he was placed, and cloſely *apply* it to all our ſelves as a perfect Pattern of Action. *Thus* and *thus* did my Saviour, *Sic ille manus, ſic ora* ---- *ſo* he demeaned himſelf when he was in my Circumſtances, after *this manner* he acted, and *thus* he ſuffered; and can I follow a more *glorious* Example; nay, would it not be a burning Shame for me *not* to *imitate* his *Manners* whilſt I profeſs my ſelf his *Diſciple?* Think, O my Soul, what would he have now done, if he were in *thy* Condition, and had thy Temptations before him. Would he have *pawned* his Innocence for ſuch a *Trifle*, or *proſtituted* himſelf to ſuch a *baſe*, *infamous* Action, to avoid ſuch an *inconſiderable* Inconvenience? No, doubtleſs he *would not*; and art thou not aſhamed to *comply* with ſuch a Temptation, knowing with what indignation thy Saviour would have *rejected* it? If we would but thus inure our ſelves to *reflect* upon our Saviours Example, and *apply* it to, and *compare* it with our own Actions, we cannot imagine with what a divine *Emulation* it would inſpire us; how it would *animate* our Weakneſſes, and *ſhame* our Irregularities, and *inamour* our Souls with true Virtue and Goodneſs.

III. To the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Chriſtian Warfare it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould frequently apply our ſelves for *Advice* and *Direction* to our *ſpiritual Guides*. For it is to be conſidered, that men of a *ſecular* Life and Converſation are generally ſo engaged in the Buſineſs and Affairs of this World, that they very rarely acquire Skill enough in Religion to conduct themſelves ſafely

to Heaven through all thoſe Difficulties and Temptations that lie in their way. For before they can be capable to guide themſelves ſafely, they muſt in all points of great moment be able to diſtinguiſh between *Truth* and *Falſhood*, and to make a difference between *good* and *evil*, which in many Inſtances do border ſo *near upon* one another, that it requires much greater Skill and Knowledge than the Generality of men are Maſters of to diſcern the *Point* and *Boundary* that parts them. And ſuppoſing their *Underſtandings* to be ſo well inſtructed as to be able to reſolve them truly in all thoſe doubtful Caſes wherein they are or may be concerned, yet ſtill there is generally ſuch a fault in their *Wills* as renders them incompetent Judges for themſelves; and that is, that through an Exceſs of *Self-love* they are prone to be *partial* in their own Concerns, and conſequently, unleſs the Caſe be very *plain*, to vote that *true* that is moſt for their Intereſt, and *determine* on that ſide they are moſt inclined to. For when a mans Judgment is before in *Suſpence*, a very *ſmall* weight of Intereſt on the *wrong* ſide of the Queſtion, uſually turns the Scale againſt the *greater* probability on the *right*. And whilſt Intereſt *feeds* mens Affections, and their Affections *bribe* their Judgments, it will be almoſt impoſſible for them to ſecure their Innocence whilſt they determine all Caſes of Right and Wrong at the Tribunal of their own Reaſon. For when once they have determined *falſely* (as *many times* to be ſure they will) beſides the many ſingle Miſcarriages in *Practice* that will be conſequent thereunto; by practiſing on upon their *falſe* Determinations, they

they will intangle themſelves in ſuch evil *Cuſtoms* and *Habits*, as by that time they have *diſcovered* the Error of their *Judgment* will render it very difficult for them to *correct* the Error of their *Practice*. And therefore to ſecure our ſelves in our Innocence and Duty, it is mighty neceſſary that in all doubtful Caſes we ſhould appeal from *our ſelves* to the Judgment of *others*, who having no Intereſt to *biaſs* them one way or t'other, will be much more *impartial*, and therefore (if they have but *equal* Underſtanding) more *competent* Judges of our Caſe than our ſelves.

Upon both which accounts the Chriſtian Religion hath wiſely *ſeparated* an Order of Men from the world to be the *Guides* and *Conducts* of Souls, to *overſee* and *direct* the ſecular Flock, who upon the above-mentioned accounts cannot be ſuppoſed to be in *all* Caſes competent Guides for themſelves. For 'twas to this purpoſe that our Saviour before his Aſcenſion commiſſioned his Diſciples, *Matt.* xxviii. 18, 19, 20. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* And that he did not intend this meerly for a *temporary* Commiſſion which was to *expire* with the firſt *Biſhops* and *Propagators* of the Goſpel, but deſigned to have it *derived* from their hands to all the *ſucceeding* Ages of Chriſtianity, is evident not only from the Promiſe annexed to it, that *he would be with them to the end of the world*, which plainly ſhews that 'twas to continue in force

till *then*; but also from hence, that they to whom this Commission was *immediately* given, did *actually* derive it to others, 2 *Tim.* i. 6. with a strict Charge that *these* also should *successively* derive it to others, *Tit.* i. 5.

And as by this *perpetual* Commission Christ hath Established a Succession of men to be the *Guides* of Souls to the end of the World, so he hath obliged all Christian People to *attend to* and *respect* them as such. For *he that heareth you*, saith he, *heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me*, Luke x. 16. and 1 Cor. iv. 1. the Apostle injoyns all Christians *to account of these spiritual guides as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*; so also, 1 *Thes.* v. 12, 13. he earnestly *beseeches them*, as a matter of vast importance, *that they would know them which labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and were to admonish them, and esteem them very highly in love for their works sake*; and *Heb.* xiii. 17. he gives this Injunction, *Obey them which have the rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.*

There being therefore an Order of men that are thus *sanctified* and *set apart* from the World, by the Commission of our Saviour, to *consult* the various Necessities of Souls, and *administer* to them in all their religious Concerns; it would doubtless mightily contribute to their successful *Progress* in the Christian Warfare, if in all their *straights* and *difficulties* men would *apply* themselves to

to them for Counſel and Direction with ſuch Modeſty and Sincerity as they ought to do. For beſides that they might reaſonably expect a greater *Bleſſing* upon *their* Counſels than *other* mens, they being *commiſſioned* Guides under the great Shepherd of Souls, who, we muſt needs ſuppoſe, will more eſpecially *co-operate* with the Means of his own Ordination: beſides this, I ſay, they being perſons that are wholly *devoted* to the Study and Miniſtries of Religion, muſt needs be ſuppoſed *cæteris paribus*, to have a farther *Inſight* into the Caſes of Souls, into their *Dangers* and *Refuges*, *Diſeaſes* and *Remedies*, and conſequently to be better able to *counſel* and *direct* them than men of a *ſecular* Life and Converſation. If therefore men would be but ſo kind to themſelves, as to apply themſelves in all their ſpiritual Exigencies to a *holy*, *wiſe*, and *well-inſtructed* Guide; to *uncover* their Sores, *lay open* their Caſes, and *reveal* the Secrets of their Souls to him, ſo far as is neceſſary to enable him to make proper Applications; it is not to be expreſſed what a *vaſt* Advantage they might make of him. He would be inſtead of a *good Genius* or *Tutelar Angel* to their Souls, to ſuggeſt many a good *Thought* to them, and feed their Meditations with many an uſeful *Notion*; to enable them to *extract* from the Articles of their Belief their juſt and proper Inferences, and reduce them to practical Principles, to *rectifie* their Wandrings, and *extricate* them from their Doubts; to *comfort* them in their Sorrows, and *quicken* them in their Indiſpoſitions; to *warm* their Indifferencies, and *moderate* their Zeal, ſo as that they may neither be *becalmed*

by the one, nor *overborn* by the too violent Guſts of the other; and in a word, to *direct* them to the proper Methods of *mortifying* their bad Inclinations, and *conducting* their Religion ſo, as to render it more *eaſie* and *delightful* to them. Theſe and a great many other good Offices a *wiſe* and *well-experienced* Guide would be able to do men, if they would but take him along with them in their *Journey* to Heaven, and *modeſtly* ſubmit themſelves to his Conduct and Direction. And in thus doing, they would act not only with greater *Security* to their Innocence, but with greater *ſatisfaction* to their Conſciences; becauſe then their Actions would be warranted, not only by their own *private* Sentiments, which in many Caſes they will have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect, but alſo by the *better* and more *impartial* Judgment of an *authoriſed* Guide. For if under *his* Conduct they ſhould happen in any doubtful Inſtance to *erre* from the way of Truth or Righteouſneſs, they will have this Satisfaction, that they have uſed the *beſt* Means to *prevent* it, the Means to which God himſelf hath *remitted* them, to whom alone they are accountable for their Actions, and who, as they may well imagine, will very much *compaſſionate* ſuch Miſcarriages as may follow upon their Submiſſion to his own Appointments. But if notwithſtanding the great Care that he hath taken of their Souls, in appointing them *Pilots* to ſteer them ſafely to Heaven, they will *embark* without them, and preſume ſo far upon their own Skill as to venture to their eternal *Port* through all thoſe *Rocks* and *Quickſands* that lie in their way; they muſt needs be in great Danger of miſcarrying, which

which if they do, they may thank *themselves* for it and can expect no *Pity* from God, whose careful provision for their eternal Safety they have so ungratefully *contemned* and *neglected*.

IV. To our prosperous *Course* and *Progress* in the Christian Warfare it is also necessary that, as often as we can, we should actually *intend* and *aim* at God in the Course of our Lives and Actions. For it is of mighty Advantage to the Conduct of a mans Life to have his *Intentions* united, and continually to act with one steady *Drift* and *Aim*. Because while he intends but *one* thing, he unites the whole *Vigour* of his Nature in the pursuit of it, and is continually driving at it with all the *Force* and *Activity* of his Faculties. 'Tis an *Italian* Proverb, *From the man of one Business good Lord deliver me*; because minding *that* only, he must needs be supposed to be the more *expert* and *sagacious* in it, and consequently the more able to *exceed* and *over-reach* another man who hath only minded it by the *bye*; but when a man acts with a multifarious Intention, he must needs be *distracted* in his Operations, and the force of his Faculties being *divided* by the multiplicity of his Aims must needs be so *weakned* that 'twill be impossible for him to pursue any one of them with *Vigour* and *Activity*. 'Tis one of *Pythagoras* his Maxims, Δεῖ καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἕνα γίνεσθαι, *a man ought to be one*, *i. e.* so far as he is able, to fix all his Aims upon one *End*, and unite them in one *Center*, and not to suffer himself to be tossed hither and thither by *independent* Designs and Intentions; because this will unavoidably *distract* him in his prosecutions, and so *divide* and *weaken* his Principles of

Action, that he will be able to do nothing to any Purpoſe. God therefore being the great Object of Religion, it is neceſſary in order to our progreſs therein, that we ſhould, as much as in us lies, *reſpect* and *aim* at him in the whole Courſe of our Actions; that we ſhould continually *look up* to him as to the directing Star by which we are to *ſteer* our Motions, and *conduct* our whole Lives under a fixt Intention to *obey* his Will, and *imitate* his Nature.

And indeed unleſs we do this, we are not good Men in the Senſe and Judgment of Religion. For Religion, as ſuch, is a Rule of divine *Worſhip*; and under this Notion the Chriſtian Religion in particular enjoyns all its Duties, *viz.* of *Homage* and *Worſhip*, to God. For it requires us to *do all as unto God*, Col. iii. 23. and *to do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. that is to do all in *Obedience* to him, and *Imitation* of him, from a ſincere Acknowledgment of the Perfections of his Nature, of his ſoveraign Authority over us, and immutable Right to Rule and command us. Not that an *actual*, *explicite* Intention of *obeying* or *imitating* God is neceſſary to every good Action; for our occaſions of doing good, being ſo *infinite*, and ſo *often* occurring in our ſecular Affairs, and our Minds being ſo incapable as they are, of attending *many* things *at once*; it is impoſſible for us actually to intend Obedience to God in *every* good thing we perform; but that in the *general* we ſhou'd heartily intend it is indiſpenſably neceſſary to the conſecrating our beſt Actions, and adopting them into the Family of Religion. For that we muſt obey God, is the fundamental Law of Religion,

Religion, from whence all the particular Commands and Prohibitions of it do receive their Force and Obligation. So that unleſs we do what he commands with a *general Intention* of Mind to obey him, we do not act upon a religious Obligation; and conſequently though our Actions ſhould be *materially* good, yet are they not *formally* religious.

Now to the fixing and ſetling ſuch a *general Intention* in our Minds, it is neceſſary that in the particular Exerciſes of our Religion we ſhould, ſo far as we are able, *actually intend* and *aim* at God; that we ſhould throw by all other Ends, ſo far as we are able, and refer our Actions *directly* and *immediately* to him; in a word, that we ſhould *formally devote* and *dedicate* them to his bleſſed Will and Pleaſure, ſo as to be able to ſay, *this* and *this* I do *purely* to pleaſe God, with a *ſingle Intention* of Soul to *reſemble* and pleaſe him, to tranſcribe his Nature, and comply with his Will. For which end we muſt take care, as oft as we can, to perform our religious Actions in ſuch a manner, as that no *ſecular* Ends may interpoſe between God and our Intentions; to be as *private* and as *modeſt* as we can in our Religion, and not expoſe it any more than needs muſt to the eye of the World, leſt *Applauſe* and *Reputation* ſhould intrude themſelves upon us, and carry away our *Intention* from God. For thus our Saviour adviſes in the Caſe of Charity and Prayer, *Matt.* vi. 1, 7. that *we ſhould not do our Alms before men, to be ſeen of them*, nor *ſound a trumpet before them*, to make the Streets ring of our Charity; nay, if poſſible, *that we ſhould not let our left hand know what our right*

right hand doth; but that our Alms ſhould be *ſecret*, and known only to God and our ſelves; and that when we *pray*, we ſhould not affect to make a pompous ſhew of it, *in the Synagogues and corners of the ſtreets*, but *that we ſhould enter into our Cloſets and ſhut our door*, and in the moſt *private* manner unboſom our Souls to God; the ſenſe of all which is that we ſhould endeavour, as far as in us lies, ſo to *circumſtantiate* our Charity and Devotion as not to give any Opportunity to ſecular Ends and Aims to obtrude themſelves upon us, to *mingle* with our pious *Intentions*, and *deflower* the Purity of them.

Not that I think it *unlawful* for a man to intend any thing but God in the diſcharge of his Duty, or that our Intention is *bad* when it immediately reſpects any *worldly* End, ſuch as Pleaſure, or Profit, or Honour, which are propoſed by God himſelf as Arguments to perſuade men to their Duty; and what hurt can it be for men to *aim* at that in the diſcharge of their Duty, which God hath propoſed to them as an *Encouragement* to it? 'Tis true if worldly Advantage be the *only* or *chief* End we aim at, our *Intention* is naught, and ſo are all the *Actions* thence proceeding; but if together with that we do ſo heartily *intend* and *aim* to pleaſe God and conform our ſelves to his bleſſed Will and Nature, as to continue on in the path of our Duty to him, not only when we have no proſpect of outward Advantage to induce us to it, but when outward Evils and inconveniences lie in our way, we need not doubt but our Intention is truly *good* and *ſincere*, notwithſtanding thoſe immediate Reſpects which it many times hath to

ſecular

ſecular Ends and Inducements. But yet it is certain that the *more* it reſpects theſe, the more *imperfect* it is, and the more liable to be vanquiſhed by outward Temptations. For it's a plain ſign that 'tis conſcious of its own Weakneſs, when it dares not ſtand alone, but is fain to call in to it the Aſſiſtance of theſe worldly Ends to ſupport and defend it; and the leſs of worldly Aim there is in our religious Intention, to be ſure the more *pure* and *ſimple* it is, and the more of *ſubſtantial* Piety there is in it; and though it may be truly ſincere notwithſtanding its being *compounded* with ſecular Aims and Reſpects, yet the more of theſe there is in it; the *weaker* and more *inſtable* it muſt neceſſarily be. For, our Mind being *finite*, cannot poſſibly intend *many* things with *equal* Strength and Vigour, as it can do *one*; and when its Intention is *diſperſed* among various Objects, it muſt neceſſarily be more *languid* than when 'tis *collected*, *united*, and *fixt* upon one; and conſequently the *more* a mans Intention reſpects the World, the *leſs* in proportion it muſt reſpect God, and ſo on the contrary. And then the leſs a man reſpects *God* in his Duty, and the more he reſpects the *World*, the more liable he will be to the Temptations of worldly Loſs or Advantage. For when thoſe Advantages which he ſo much reſpects, lie on the *oppoſite* ſide to his Duty, to be ſure he will be ſo much the more *inclined* to deſert it; and as often as Fortune ſhifts ſides, and carries with it the Advantages of Pleaſure, Profit or Honour, from *Virtue* to *Vice*, or from *Vice* to *Virtue*, he will ſtill be ready to *face about* with it, and be always *veering* like a Weathercock to a contrary Point

Point upon every Change of Wind. Whereas when a mans Intention *purely* reſpects God, 'twill be *immovably* fixt among all the Changes and Alterations from without. For there is no outward Change or *Capricio* of Fortune can hinder a man from pleaſing God, whoſe Love to us depends not upon our being *poor* or *rich*, *pleaſed* or *pained*, *depreſſed* or *advanced*, but upon our being truly *virtuous* and *religious*. And therefore if our Aim be *purely* to pleaſe him, we ſhall be ſure to continue ſo, which ſide ſoever Fortune ſmiles upon.

Wherefore to our ſucceſsful Progreſs in Religion it is highly neceſſary that, ſo far as in us lies, we ſhould *abſtract* and *ſeparate* our religious Intentions from all theſe *worldly* reſpects; and this muſt be done by looking frequently up to God, and actually *referring* and *dedicating* our Actions to him; by ſhutting our eyes, when we are entring upon any Duty, to all worldly Conſiderations, and determining with our ſelves, *this* I will do purely becauſe 'tis *Godlike*, or becauſe God hath *commanded* it; whether I ſhall be *commended* or *diſgraced* for it, whether I ſhall *get* or *loſe* by it I will not now regard, it is ſufficient that it is *good*, and that God hath commanded it, and therefore for this Reaſon *only* I will do it, without any *other* Reſpect or Conſideration. By which means we ſhall by degrees ſo *purifie* our Intentions, and *refine* them from worldly Aims, that we ſhall be able to act *vigorouſly* in Religion without any other Reſpect but that of *pleaſing* God, and *conforming* our ſelves to his Will and Nature. And when once we can do thus, we are in a great forward-

forwardneſs in Religion. For now the Will of *God* hath got ſuch an Aſcendent over *ours*, that as we can chearfully obey him without *external* Inducements, ſo we can freely contemn all Inducements *to the contrary*; and it being our *great* and *chief* aim to *pleaſe* and be *like* him, the things that are *without* us will have very little Power to move us one way or t'other. Becauſe now our great aim is *above* them, and our eyes are ſo ſtedfaſtly *fixt* upon God, that we are not at leiſure to regard them. And our Mind being thus *indiſpoſed* to liſten to the reſtleſs Importunities of *external* Goods and Evils, our Innocence is ſafe, and we may paſs triumphantly through all their Temptations. 'Tis a noble Saying of *Epictetus*, lib. 2. c. 19. οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλως ἐκβαλεῖν λύπην, φόβον, ἐπιθυμίαν, &c. εἰμὴ πρὸς μόνον τὸν θεὸν ἀποβλέποντα, ἐνείνῳ μόνῳ προσπεπονθότα, τοῖς ἐκείνε προσάγμασι καθωσιωμένον, *i. e.* "There is no other way for a man to "eject ſorrow, and fear, and luſt from his ſoul, but "by looking up to God alone, and reſigning our "ſelves to him only, and devoting our lives to the "Obedience of his Commandments. And elſewhere he tells his Scholars, that the main thing which he drove at was, Ἀπολελύσαι ὑμᾶς ἐλευθέρους, εὐδαιμονοῦντας, εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἀφορῶντας, ἐν παντὶ μικρῷ καὶ μεγάλῳ, *i. e.* "To make them free and bleſſed by per-"ſuading them to look up to God in every thing, "whether it be ſmall or great, *lib.* 2. *c.* 19. For whilſt in our religious Intentions we do *too much* reſpect the things that are without us, we do in a great meaſure *intruſt* them with our Virtue and Religion; and ſo far as we make them Inducements to our Duties, ſo far it is in their Power to

to *ſecure* or *betray* it. As for Inſtance, ſo much as I aim at *Profit* in any *religious* Action, ſo much *Power* Profit hath over my Religion; and if the ſame Profit ſhould invite me to a *wicked* Action, it will have as much Power to *betray* my Religion, as it had to *ſecure* it; for the ſame Gain will have the ſame Influence on me when it tempts me to *ſin*, as it hath when it tempts me to *obey*. What a dangerous thing therefore is it for men to intruſt ſuch a treaſure as their Innocence and Religion in ſuch *irreſponſible* hands, and to give thoſe outward things which are the Temptations of *Vice*, a power to diſpoſe of their *Virtue?* What is this but to commit the keeping of our *Sheep* to a *Wolf*, or of our *Chaſtity* to a *Goat?* Wherefore as we would be ſafe in our religious *Progreſs*, it highly concerns us to *purifie* our good Intentions ſo far as we are able from all *worldly* Reſpects, and to level them *directly* and *immediately* at God. And in order hereunto;

V. To render the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Chriſtian Warfare ſucceſsful, it is alſo neceſſary that we poſſeſs our Minds, with an awful Apprehenſion of Gods *Preſence* with, and *Inſpection* over us. Among the many excellent Rules, which the Heathen Moraliſts have given for the Conduct of mens Lives, this is one, that in the whole Courſe of their Lives they ſhould imagine ſome *excellent perſon*, for whom they have a great *Veneration*, to be *preſent* with 'um, as a *Witneſs* and *Spectator* of all their Actions. And it was wholſom Advice that one gave his *lewd* Friend, that he ſhould hang the Picture of his *grave* and *ſerious* Father in the Room where he was wont to celebrate his

his *Debauches*; imagining that the *ſevere* eye of the good old Man, though but in *Effigie*, would give a check to the *wanton* Sallies of the intemperate Youth. And if the bare *Fiction* of a Mans being *preſent* with us, or his being preſent only in a *dead* Picture, may be rationally ſuppoſed to have ſo ſtrong an Influence on our Actions; of how much greater Force muſt our firm *Belief* and *Senſe* of Gods Preſence with us be to regulate our Lives and Actions? And that he is thus *preſent* with us we have ſufficient reaſon to conclude, not only from the infinite *Plenitude* of his Eſſence, which being *Self-exiſtent* could not be *bounded* or *limited* by any Cauſe from without, and therefore muſt neceſſarily be *boundleſs* and *immenſe*; but alſo from expreſs Aſſertions of Scripture, which aſſures us *that his eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good*, Prov. xv. 3. *That he is a God at hand, and not a God afar off*; *and that no man can hide himſelf in ſecret places that he ſhall not ſee him*; *and that he fills heaven and earth*, Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. and that we can go no whither *from his preſence*, Pſal. cxxxix. 7, 8. and that *all things are naked and open to his eyes*, Heb. iv. 13. that is, that the World is *ſurrounded* and *filled* with his Being, which is both the *Womb* that *contains*, and the *Soul* that *pervades* the Creation; and that being thus *preſent* with us where-ever we are, he muſt needs be ſuppoſed to have a conſtant *Inſpection* over us, and a clear *Senſe* and *Perception* of whatſoever we do.

And he being thus preſent with us in *Reality*, and not in *Fiction* or *Picture*, it muſt doubtleſs be of mighty avail to the Well-government of our Lives;

Lives; to be continually inſpired with an *actual* and *vigorous* Senſe of it. And therefore our Saviour commands us to do good from a lively Senſe that Gods eye is upon us, *Matt.* vi. 4, 6. *That our father who ſees us in ſecret ſhall reward us openly.* And this I conceive to be the meaning of that comprehenſive Precept which God gave to *Abraham, Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, Gen. xvii. 1. *i. e.* behave thy ſelf as one that art ſenſible thou art always in my Preſence, and under my eye, and in the ſenſe of this, ſee thou beeſt *upright* and *ſincere*, and that thou doſt not vainly attempt to impoſe upon me by any demure *Shews* or hypocritical *Pretences*. And the ſame is implied in that of the Apoſtle, *Col.* iii. 22. *Servants obey in all things your Maſters according to the fleſh, not with eye ſervice, as men pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God, i. e.* be not like thoſe Servants that do their Duty for no other end but to ingratiate themſelves with their Maſters, and accordingly do it no longer than while their Maſters eye is upon them; but do you it with all *Sincerity*, out of an awful reſpect to God, conſidering that when mans eye is *off*, his eye is *upon* you. The ſenſe of all which is, that after the example of holy *David*, Pſal. xvi. 8. we ſhould endeavour *to ſet the Lord always before us*, and to poſſeſs our minds with a quick and lively Senſe of his being continually *preſent* with us, whereſoever we are, and whatſoever we are about, and a conſtant *Witneſs* and *Spectator* of all our Actions.

And this we ſhall find will be of unſpeakable Uſe to us in the whole *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Chriſtian Warfare. For,

1. It

1. It will mightily reſtrain us from all ſinful Actions. For as S. *Auſtin* obſerves, the greateſt part of Sin is taken away if a man hath but a *Witneſs* of his Converſation; and much more if he be ſenſible that he hath ſuch a Witneſs as God, with whom he is infinitely more concerned than with all the World beſides; who is the *Judge* of all his Actions, the *Rewarder* of Vertue, and *Puniſher* of Vice, the eternal Source of all thoſe *Evils* or *Goods* that he can *fear* or *hope for*. And who but a man that is deſperately wicked, dares do an evil Action in the *Preſence* and *Sight* of ſuch a formidable Witneſs? For ſuppoſe you beheld this Almighty Being ſitting upon a Cloud in ſome viſible Form, with a Thunder-bolt in his hand; and from thence looking down upon you, *curiouſly* obſerving how you demean your ſelves, and *cloſely* purſuing you with his awful eye through all your dark *Retreats* and *Privacies*; would not the thought of any Action that is diſpleaſing to him be ready to ſtrike you into *Trembling* and *Horrour*? Could you imagine your ſelves to be any where ſecure in your Wickedneſs while you ſaw your ſelves uncovered to his All-ſeeing Eyes, to which your Cloſets lie as open as your Halls, and your Hearts as the High-ways? Doubtleſs you could not. Why now the lively *Belief* and *Apprehenſion* of a thing is equivalent to a *ſenſible* Perception. If I were *throughly aſſured* that the King were liſtening behind the Curtain, and heard every word that is ſpoken in the Room, I ſhould doubtleſs be as much afraid of talking Treaſon againſt him, though I ſaw him *not*, as if he ſtood juſt *before* me. And ſo though God be with me in an

inviſible manner, and I am not able to ſee him through that thick Curtain of Matter which is drawn between me and his Spiritual Eſſence, yet if I *firmly believe* that he is *behind* it, and am conſtantly aware that he is *liſtening* to what I *ſay*, and *prying* into what I *do*, that he keeps *Intelligence* with my *Thoughts*, and is intimately *acquainted* with all my *Deſigns* and *Intentions*, it will render me as cautious of my Thoughts, and Words, and Actions, as if I ſaw him ſtanding by me in a *viſible Shechinah* or *Glory*, to *record* every Paſſage of my Life, and *enter* into his Debt-Books every *Item* of my Guilt againſt the great Day of Accounts. But how much the want of ſuch a due Apprehenſion of Gods *Preſence* with us, lets men looſe to all Wickedneſs, may be collected from that of the Prophet, *Ezek.* ix. 9. *The Iniquity of the houſe of Judah is exceeding great, and the Land is full of bloud, and the City full of perverſeneſs*, and how comes this to paſs? Why, *they ſay, the Lord hath forſaken the earth, and the Lord ſeeth not*; whereas on the contrary, *David* attributes his *keeping Gods Precepts and Teſtimonies*, to the lively Senſe he had that his ways were always *before* God, *i. e.* lay open to his *Sight* and *Inſpection*, Pſal. cxix. 168. But then,

2. Such a lively Senſe of Gods *Preſence* with, and *Inſpection* over us, will be of mighty Uſe to keep us *ſincere* and *upright* in the whole Courſe of our Actions. For alas to what purpoſe ſhould we *diſſemble* and *conceal* our Wickedneſs from the eye of the World, ſo long as we *lie open* to the eye of God? Would you not think it very ſtrange to ſee a Company of Priſoners, that within a few Hours

Hours are to be tried for their Lives, ſolicitouſly concerning themſelves how to appear lovely and innocent *to one another*, hiding their Deformities, and diſguiſing their Crimes with *artificial* Pretexts and Apologies, that ſo they may *cheat* and *juggle* one another into a mutual good Opinion of themſelves; but in the mean time take no notice of their *Judge*, who ſits before them upon the Bench, obſerving all their *Tricks* and *Impoſtures*, and holds their Lives in his Hands, being commiſſionated to *diſcharge* or *condemn* them according as he finds them *innocent* or *guilty*. And yet juſt thus do thoſe men act whoſe Religion is nothing but a vain Oſtentation and Ambition of popular applauſe; they *skrew* their Looks, *ſtudy* their Actions, *force* their Inclinations, and all to compoſe themſelves into an outward *Semblance* of Religion; they imploy a world of Care and Art to *diſguiſe* themſelves, and with the Colours of Sanctity to *varniſh* their unhallowed Natures; they openly *deny* themſelves their deareſt Pleaſures, and in the view of the world are many times forced to act againſt the *grain* of their ſtrongeſt Inclinations; and all this to *maſk* their depraved Tempers, that they may *appear* what they *are not*, in the view of the world, and juggle themſelves into a *Saint-like* Reputation: but whilſt they are thus induſtriouſly *courting* the good Opinion of their Fellow-priſoners, their All-ſeeing *Judge* upon whoſe final Sentence their everlaſting Fate depends, is *preſent* with them; and, though they take no more notice of him than if he were a *Cypher* in the world, is perfectly *conſcious* to all their Artifice, and *ſees through* all their hypocritical Diſguiſes,

and will ere long *unmask* and *expoſe* them to the View and Scorn of all the World. And this conſidered, what a ridiculous Folly is *Hypocriſie*, that *hides* us only from thoſe that have *little* or *nothing* to do with us, but leaves us *bare* and *naked* to his eye with whom we are moſt *concerned*. Alas! what a poor project is it to take ſo much pains, as we do, to recommend our ſelves to men, to men that muſt ſtand at the *ſame* Tribunal, and undergo the *ſame* Judgment with our ſelves? For what will their *good* Opinion avail us, if the Judge *diſapprove* us, in whoſe hands our Lives and Souls are? If he think *well* of us, we are ſafe, though all the World ſhould condemn us; but if he condemn us, though every Creature ſhould *acquit*, they cannot *reſcue* us from his Sentence. But alas! how *differently* ſoever God and Men may think of us *now*, yet when he comes to diſcover his Thoughts of us, in his publick Judgment and Sentence, all the World will be of *his* Mind; and if we *ſtand right* in his Opinion, we ſhall be *applauded* by the whole Univerſe, howſoever we may be vilified now; as on the contrary, if he *condemn* us, we ſhall be ſure to be *hiſſed* at throughout all the Congregation of Spirits, how *glorioufly* ſoever we may be thought of at preſent. And by how much the better we are eſteemed of *now*, by ſo much the more we ſhall be hiſſed at *then*, when the *Cheat* is diſcovered, and the hypocritical Vizor is pluckt from our Devils faces.

This if men duly conſidered, and fixt it in their Minds, would effectually cure them of all their *Hypocriſie*. For alas! what Hypocriſie can ſo *cunningly* diſguiſe them, as to conceal 'em from Omniſci-

Omniſcience? If men will be wicked therefore, they were e'en as good put on a *bold Face*, and be wicked *openly*; for 'tis to very little purpoſe for them to *ſneak* into Corners, unleſs they could find one *dark* enough to *conceal* them from God, and *cover* them from his All-ſeeing Eye. For why ſhould that man be *aſhamed* or *afraid* to let a Boy or Neighbour be *conſcious* to his Wickedneſs, that never ſcruples to commit it in the open *View* of the dreadful Majeſty of Heaven, by whoſe final Sentence his everlaſting Fate muſt be decided?

And ſo on the other hand, to what purpoſe ſhould we ſtudy to be more *devout* and *temperate*, *ſober*, and *charitable* in the view of the World, than we are in our Retirements, when we have no other Eye but God's upon us? That which we are mainly concerned in, is to approve our ſelves to *him*, and if we can do this, what great matter is it though our *Cloſet* be all our *Stage*, and *Heaven* our only *Spectator?* God *hears* the ſofteſt Whiſpers of our Souls, and *ſees* through all our honeſt Intentions, and our moſt *ſecret* Vertues are as *legible* to his Eye as if they were written on our Foreheads with a Sun-beam. We need no Trumpet to proclaim our Alms in his *Ears*, for he knows by whom ſuch a poor man was *relieved*, ſuch a ſtarving family *ſuccoured*, though we ſhould not ſuperſcribe our *Names* upon our Charity, nor *let our left hand know what our right hand hath done.* And if by the *ſincere* Diſcharge of our Duty we have *approved* our ſelves to God, what need we concern our ſelves any farther; ſince 'tis not from *Men*, but from *God*, that we expect the *Recompence*

of our Obedience. No doubtleſs, did we but live under the conſtant ſenſe of Gods *Preſence* with, and *Inſpection* over us, we ſhould regard him *much more* in every good action, and the good Opinion of the World *much leſs* than we do; and the more *ſecret* our good Deeds were, the more we ſhould *rejoyce* in them, becauſe they would give us a *ſtronger* Teſtimony of our *Simplicity* and *Sincerity*. For what ſhould move us to be good when God only ſees us, but *pure* reſpect to his Authority, and an *honeſt* Intention of obeying him? and if *Obedience* be our Deſign, the more *private* our good Deeds are, the more *Pleaſure* they will affords us, becauſe thoſe good Deeds have *moſt* of Obedience in them, that have *leaſt* of the Theatre.

VI. To proſper our *Courſe* and *Progreſs* in the Chriſtian Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary, that we ſhould frequently *examine* and *review* our own actions. For this our Religion injoyns as a neceſſary Part of the *militant* Life of a Chriſtian. So 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5. *Examine your ſelves whether you be in the faith, prove your own ſelves*; and particularly, it is injoyned as a proper Preparation to the Sacrament, *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat*, 1 Cor. xi. 28. So alſo *Gal.* vi. 4. *Let a man prove*, or *examine, his own work*, where the Greek word δοκιμάζετω, which in all theſe Texts we render to *prove* or *examine*, hath two Significations. Firſt, to call our ſelves to *Account*, to *try* our *paſt* actions by the Rule, whether they be good or evil; Secondly, to take ſuch a due *Care* of our actions as that upon a ſtrict Trial of them we may be able to *approve* them to God and our own Conſciences.

In

In the *firſt* of which Senſes the New Teſtament doth moſt commonly underſtand it, namely, to call our ſelves to *Account*, and make a ſtrict *Survey* of our actions, and paſs an impartial *Judgment* upon them, whether they are good or evil; and accordingly, 1 *Cor.* xi. 31. inſtead of δοκιμαζέτω in *Verſe* 28. i. e. *Let a man examine himſelf*, the Apoſtle uſes as a Synonymous Phraſe, διακρίνωμεν, *i. e.* if we *judge our ſelves*, if we *ſummon* our paſt Actions before the *Tribunal* of our Conſciences, and *try* and *examine* them by the Rule whether they are good or evil, and according as we find them, to *approve* or *condemn* our ſelves for them.

And this is a Duty of great Neceſſity to the ſucceſsful Proſecution of our Chriſtian Warfare. For unleſs we do frequently *reflect* upon our ſelves, and take a *ſtrict* account of our paſt actions and Behaviour, we ſhall incur a thouſand Errors and Immoralities in the Hurry of our ſecular Occaſions, without taking any *notice* of them; and thoſe ſins which we *heedleſly* commit, and never *think of* afterwards, though at firſt perhaps they may have little or no *Malice* in them, do yet leave a *malicious* Infuſion behind them, and *infect* the will with bad Inclinations, and inſenſibly *diſpoſe* it to *wilful* and *deliberate* Sins. For the Pleaſure of *one* bad action will be ſtill inviting us to *another*, and that to a *third*, and ſo we ſhall be inconſiderately *tolled* on from Sin to Sin in the courſe of a *heedleſs* and *unreflecting* Life, till, before ever we are aware, our Inclination to the Sin which we have ſo heedleſly *repeated*, becomes too ſtrong for our pious *Reſolution*. For when we have *careleſly* permitted

one Sin to break through our Fence, that will open a gap for *another* to follow, and if this be not preſently *ſtopt* by Repentance, 'twill make the Breach yet *wider* for *others*, and thoſe again for *others*, till at laſt they have quite *trodden down* our good Reſolution, and made a *Through-fare* in our Wills for a Cuſtom of ſinning. But if we frequently *reflect* upon, and *examine* our ſelves, 'tis impoſſible our Faults ſhould long eſcape our *Diſcovery*, and we ſhall be ſure to *ſee* them time enough to *correct* and *amend* them before they are too *deeply* rooted in our Natures, and have wound themſelves too *far* into our Inclinations; and a wound in our *Innocence*, as well as our Bodies, may be eaſily cured, if it be taken *in time*, but if it be *neglected* too long, it will *rankle* by degrees into an incurable Gangreen.

And as frequent *Self-Examination* is a great *Bridle* to our *Sin*, ſo it is alſo an effectual *Spur* to our *Vertue*. For as when a man reflects upon his Sins and Miſcarriages, and conſiders *how* and *where* he hath done amiſs, his Conſcience will be preſently *urging* and *exciting* him to Repentance and Amendment; ſo when he reflects upon his own Vertue and Sincerity, his Conſcience will *ſmile upon* and *crown* him with Applauſes, and give him ſuch a *ſweet* and *grateful* Reliſh of his own Actions, as will mightily *incourage* him to *perſevere* in Well-doing. For in all our *Self-Examinations* we taſte the difference between *Good* and *Evil*, the *Sweetneſs* of that, and the *Bitterneſs* of this, and conſequently, the oftner we do ſo, the more we ſhall be ſure to *like* and *approve* of the one, and to *diſlike* and *nauſeate* the other.

Where-

Wherefore to ſecure a good ſucceſs to this our Chriſtian Warfare, as it is neceſſary, eſpecially *at firſt*, that we ſhould every *Morning*, before we go into the World, repeat and enforce our good *Reſolution*; ſo it is no leſs requiſite, eſpecially till we have made ſome *conſiderable* Progreſs, that we ſhould every *Night*, when we are withdrawn from the World, ſtrictly *examine* the performances of the Day, whether they are ſuch as do comport with our ſolemn Engagements. And if upon an impartial Survey, it appear that they do, though as yet it be but *weakly* and *imperfectly*, let us *attend* to the Senſe of our own Minds, to that ſilent Melody that reſounds from our Conſciences to our Actions, and ſo lie down in Peace, *bleſſing* and *adoring* that Grace, by which we have been *aſſiſted* and *preſerved*. Or if it appear that we have been *unwarily* faulty, for want of due Care and Watchfulneſs, let us reſolve to take more *Care* for the future, and thereby to put a timely *Stop* to our Sin before it hath too far *inſinuated* into our Will and Inclinations; but if we are conſcious of any *wilful* Breach upon our Morning Vows of Obedience, let us *lament* and *bewail* it with Shame and Indignation. What have I done, O wretched *Traitor* that I am to God and my own ſoul! I have *falſified* my Vows to Heaven, and *broke* thoſe Sacred Bands by which I was *tied up* from my Luſts, and my Ruine. What can I *plead* for my ſelf, *baſe* and *unworthy* that I am? With what Face can I go into his dreadful Preſence whom I have ſo often *mocked* with my *treacherous* Promiſes of Amendment? Yet go I will, though I am all *aſhamed* and *confounded*, and *confeſs* and *bewail* mine Iniquity before him.

If we would but take care thus to call our selves to *Account* every Night, and impartially to *censure* the Actions of the day, it is not to be imagined how fast 'twould set us *forward* in our Christian Warfare; how much the *Reflection* on a *well-spent* Day would *cheer* and *enliven* us; how the *grateful* Sense of it would *spirit* our Faculties, and *encourage* us to go on against all Oppositions; how much the *Review* of the Day would contribute to make our Reason more *vigilant*, and our Consciences more *tender* for the future; how much the Pleasure of our Sins would be *allayed* and *abated* by the *stinging* Reflections we should make upon them, and how much the Dread of having the same Reflections *repeated* to us at Night, would secure us against the *Temptations* of the Day.

VII. To prosper the *Course* of our Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that we should be very *watchful* and *circumspect*. For this also is one of those *militant* Duties which the Gospel injoyns us. Thus *Matt.* xxvi. 41. *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation*; and *Mark* xiii. 37. *What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch*: so also, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit your selves like men*; and 1 *Thes.* v. 6. *Wherefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober*; where the Nature of the Duty is plainly discovered by its Opposite or Contrary, *Let us not sleep, but watch, i. e.* do not behave your selves like men that are *asleep*, that take no Notice or Regard of what is done *by*, *to*, or *about them*; but be sure you exercise a *faithful*, *prudent*, and *constant* Care over your own Actions, and those manifold Tempta-

Temptations that *aſſault* and *ſurround* you. And therefore elſewhere 'tis expreſt by *walking circumſpectly*, Eph. v. 15. *i. e.* looking round about you, *weighing* the nature and circumſtances of your Actions, and uſing all honeſt Care either to *prevent* the Temptations that threaten you, or to *provide* againſt them; ſo that in ſhort the ſenſe of this Duty is this, that we carefully avoid acting *raſhly* and *precipitantly* without *conſidering* beforehand the Nature of our action whether it be good or evil; that in all *doubtful* and *ſuſpicious* Caſes we impartially *conſult* our Rule and Conſcience, and *look* before we *leap*, and take care to *ſatisfie* our ſelves of the Goodneſs of our *Deſigns*, before we put them into *Execution*; in a word, that we do not *careleſly* run our ſelves into Temptations, but, if poſſible, to *avoid* them, if not, to be ſure to *arm* our ſelves againſt them, and keep as *far off* from all ſin, eſpecially from that we are moſt *inclined* to, as is conſiſtent with our neceſſary Occaſions; or, in fewer words, 'tis to be always *well adviſed* in what we do, whether it be good or evil; and if it be *evil*, to remove ſo far as we can from all *Occaſions* that lead to it, and provide our ſelves with Conſiderations *againſt* it, and to keep them always *awake* in our Minds, that we may not be *ſurprized* by it unawares:

Which is a Duty indiſpenſably neceſſary for us in the whole Courſe of our Chriſtian Warfare. For whilſt we accuſtom our ſelves to act *raſhly* and *inconſiderately*, without bethinking beforehand what we ſay or do, we wander like blind men in a Field that is full of *Pits* and *Quagmires* and

and are every moment in danger of stumbling into one Mischief or other, and shall certainly plunge our selves into many an evil Custom before ever we have bethought our selves of the evil of it; and so instead of conquering our *old* Sins, we shall be ever and anon running our selves into *new* ones, and while we are running away from *one* evil, shall many times stumble into *another*, and to avoid the *Defects* of Vertue leap headlong into the *Excesses* of it. For in most moral Actions the Transition from the *utmost* of what is *lawful* into the *nearmost* of what is *sinful* is indiscernable; and that Line which parts *this* Vertue from *that* neighbouring Vice is generally so *small*, that 'tis hard to distinguish where they are *separated*, and to fix the just *Boundary* whitherto we may go and no farther. But then considering that almost every Vertue lies in the *Middle* between two sinful *Extremes*, neither of which are separated from it by any *plain* or *visible* Land-mark; how is it possible for us, without great *Care* of our Steps, to keep on stedfastly in the *right* Path, when there are so many *wrong* ones bordering upon it? For when we perceive we have wandred too far towards *either* Extreme, and are endeavouring to *retrieve* our selves, if we do not take great Care of our Steps we shall be apt to wander as far the *other* way, and so stumble out of one Extreme into another. For he who lives *heedlesly* and *incuriously*, regards not how *near* he approaches to any sin, provided he doth but keep himself out of it; and when once a man takes the Liberty to go as near to any Sin as he thinks he lawfully *may*, it is a thousand to one but he will be transported by his

his Inclination a great deal further than he *ſhould*. So true is that of *Clem. Alex. Pædag.* lib. 2. c. 1. Ταχὺ γὰρ καταπίπτουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ δρᾶν τὸ μὴ ἐξὸν, οἱ πάντα δρῶντες ἃ ἐξὸν, *i. e.* they who will do all things that are *lawful*, will quickly be induced to do what is *unlawful*; eſpecially if they be ſtrongly inclined to it; becauſe the very *Nearneſs* of what a man loves, doth always render it more *tempting* and *alluring* to him. Thus he that hath a ſtrong inclination to *Lying*, can never be ſafe ſo long as he allows himſelf to be exceſſive *talkative*; he that is vehemently propenſe to *fleſhly Luſt*, muſt needs indanger his Innocence if he come too near the farthermoſt Limits of a *modeſt* Freedom; and he whoſe nature is prone to *Malice* and *Revenge* cannot but run a mighty Hazard if he indulge to himſelf the utmoſt degree of a *juſt* and *lawful* Reſentment. For bad *Inclinations* are never ſo impatient of Reſtraint, as when they are within *Proſpect* of their proper *Satisfactions*, and the objects which attract them are *near* and *eaſie* to be injoyed. Upon which Account it muſt needs be a very dangerous thing for ſuch as are engaged in the Chriſtian Warfare to live within *Sight* of the Temptations they are moſt inclined to; becauſe the *nearer* they are to them, the more they will *court* and *importune* them, and while a man comes near a beloved *Luſt* and doth not enjoy it, he doth but *Tantalize* himſelf, and *inrage* his Appetite after thoſe vicious Satisfactions whoſe *alluring* Reliſhes he had almoſt *forgotten*. If therefore he would obtain a perfect Victory over his Luſt, he muſt not only forbear to *Act*, but alſo to *approach* it; at leaſt, till he hath ſo far weaned his Inclination

Inclination from it, as that its *Nearneſs* ceaſes to be a *Temptation* to him. For Inclination, like all other Motion, is always *ſwifteſt* when it is *neareſt* its Center, and when once 'tis within the *Reach* and *Attraction* of it, it hurries towards it with *Fury* and *Impatience*; and if in this its violent Rage it happen to break out to its beloved Sin, and to taſte the forbidden Pleaſure of it, 'twill thereby immediately *recover* all its impaired Strength, and become as *headſtrong* and *outragious* as ever; and ſo all that Ground which we get in a *Months* Abſtinence from our ſin, we ſhall loſe in a *Moments* Injoyment of it. Upon this account therefore it highly concerns us, if we would ſucceed in our Chriſtian Warfare, to be very *watchful* and *circumſpect*, to look well to our Steps, and not approach too near to *any* Sin, but eſpecially to any that we are ſtrongly *inclined* to.

VIII. To give us good Succeſs in this our Chriſtian Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that we be *diligent* and *induſtrious* in our particular *Callings*. This is one of thoſe inſtrumental Duties which our Religion preſcribes throughout the whole *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Chriſtian Warfare. Thus 1 Theſ. iv. 10, 11. *We beſeech you brethren that you increaſe more and more, and that ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own buſineſs, and work with your own hands, as we commanded ye*; and this 2 *Theſ.* iii. 10. be backs with another, that *if any would not work, they ſhould not eat, i. e.* that they ſhould not be maintained in their Sloth and Idleneſs, and like *Drones* be permitted to dwell at eaſe in the *Hive*, and devour the Labours of the more induſtrious *Bees*;

Bees; and this *verſe* xi. he calls *walking diſorderly*, and *ver.* viii. and ix. he tells us that 'twas for this cauſe that he rather choſe to *work with his own hands* for his Livelihood, than to be maintained by them, as he might juſtly have demanded; that he might make himſelf an *Example* of Diligence for them to *follow*. So alſo, Eph. iv. 28. *Let him that ſtole ſteal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, i. e.* imploying himſelf in ſome honeſt Calling, *that he may have to give to him that needs*; the ſenſe of all which is to oblige us to ingage our ſelves in ſome honeſt *Calling* or *Imployment*, and to be *diligent* and *induſtrious* in it.

And how neceſſary this is to ſecure us in the whole *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Religion, appears from hence, that we are naturally a ſort of very *active* Beings, that muſt be imployed one way or other; that we have a Mind within us, that will be always in *Motion*; that being a *ſpiritual* ſubſiſtence, and as *ſuch*, of a quite different Nature from *dull* and *ſluggiſh* Matter, will never admit of *Reſt* and *Inactivity*; that derives all its Pleaſures from *Action*, and hath nothing to live upon but the grateful reliſh of its own *Motions*. And this being the ſtate of that *active* Principle within us, that *conſtitutes* us Men, we had need take great care to keep it *honeſtly* buſied and imployed. For it being naturally ſuch an exceeding *buſie* thing, 'twill be ſure to find ſomething or other to work upon; and if it be not conſtantly imployed about *honeſt* and *lawful* things, 'twill quickly divert the current of its Motion another way, and exert its Activity upon *diſhoneſt* and *unlawful* ones. And hence

hence it is that, ſince the Apoſtaſie of Humane Nature, God hath placed the generality of Men in ſuch Circumſtances wherein ſome honeſt *Calling*, and their *Diligence* and *Induſtry* therein, is indiſpenſibly *neceſſary* to their comfortable Subſiſtence. For he wiſely conſidered that ſuch was the *Indiſpoſition* of our *degenerate* Natures to the *divine* and *ſpiritual* Exerciſes of Religion, that 'twould be impoſſible for *us* in this *imperfect* State to keep our Minds *always* intent upon them, to fix our thoughts *continually* upon him, and exert our Powers without any *Pauſe* or *Interruption* in perpetual Acts of *Love*, *Adoration*, and *Imitation* of him; that there is ſuch a *Repugnance* in our tempers to theſe bleſſed Operations, that if we had nothing elſe to do, they would ſoon grow *irkſom* and *intolerable* to us; and therefore, leſt being quite *tired* out with theſe ſpiritual Acts of Religion, we ſhould *hate* them, and ſo turn the Current of our Activity into the *contrary* Chanel, he hath placed us in ſuch Circumſtances, wherein we have frequent Opportunities to *reſt* our wearied Minds from theſe *abſtracted* Exerciſes in ſuch *innocent* Employments as are neceſſary to our comfortable Subſiſtence in this World. So that by putting us under the neceſſity of imploying our ſelves in ſecular Trades and Callings, he hath taken care to *intercept* our Minds, that they may not fly off from the *pure* Acts of Religion into the contrary Impieties; and that when they are not *divinely*, they may be *innocently* imployed; and by diverting our Activity with *honeſt*, when it is weary of *ſpiritual* Exerciſe, he hath taken a wiſe Courſe to *confine* and *bound* it, and leave it leſs

Scope

Scope and Liberty to *rove* and make Incurſions into *ſinful* and *prohibited* Actions. And therefore, as *Ariſtotle* commends *Archytas* for his Invention of Rattles, becauſe Children by playing with them are kept from breaking Veſſels of *uſe*; ſo ought we to admire the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, for thus neceſſitating us to exert our Activity in *ſecular* Arts and Trades, becauſe by thus *innocently* imploying our *corrupt* and *buſie* Natures, he hath taken an admirable Courſe to divert us from miſchievous Actions.

And he having thus obliged us by our Neceſſities to follow ſome *honeſt* Calling for a comfortable Livelihood, he expects that we ſhould be *diligent* and *induſtrious* in that *particular* Calling wherein his Providence hath placed us. For otherwiſe he loſes his End; which was to reſtrain us from being *ſinfully* active, by neceſſitating us to be *innocently* ſo. And now that by putting us into thoſe Neceſſities by which we are put upon furniſhing one another with thoſe ſeveral Conveniences of life, for the ſupply of which our reſpective Trades and Callings are intended, we by being *diligent* therein approve our ſelves *faithful* Servants in the great Family of God, and by *induſtriouſly* diſcharging thoſe *particular* Offices wherein he hath placed us, we act as *dutiful* Miniſters of his Providence towards one another. Becauſe by ſo doing we ſupply thoſe Wants and Neceſſities which God hath *made*, and which he hath made to be ſupplied by *our* Office and Miniſtries; So that now to mind our own *Buſineſs*, is a part of our *Religion*, and 'tis that particular part to which Gods Providence hath called us. If therefore we

are *idle* and *neglective* in this, we are undutiful Servants to the common Maſter of the World, how officious ſoever we may be in *other* matters. For this is the proper Work of our Office, and therefore if we are unfaithful in *this*, we can be faithful in *nothing*. Should the Bailiff of a Family *neglect* letting his maſters Lands and gathering in his Rents, he would be thought a *bad* Servant, how *diligent* ſoever he might be in the Kitchin or the Stables; and ſo if we are *remiſs* in our *particular* Offices and Employments, we are *bad* Servants to God, how *ſedulous* ſoever we may be either in the Offices of *other* Men, or in the *common* Services which we all owe him: and he that neglects his own Calling to ſerve God in his Cloſet or in the Church, is like an unfaithful Steward that neglects providing for the Family, to dreſs the Garden and water the Flowers.

'Tis true, as we ought not to devote to the *common* Service of God that Time and Attendance which by the Rules of Prudence and good Husbandry are appropriated to our *particular* Callings; ſo neither ought we to permit our particular Calling ſo to *ingroſs* our Time and Attendance as to leave none for our Prayers and thoſe common Services whether *private* or *publick*, which as Creatures and Chriſtians we are obliged to render to our Creator. For as he that to *ſerve* God *neglects* his Calling is a *religious* Truant, ſo he that to *attend* his Calling *neglects* to ſerve God is a *prophane* Drudge. But for a truly *pious* and *induſtrious* Man it is not at all difficult ſo to keep his Buſineſs and his Religion *apart*, as that they may not *interfere* with one another; and faithfully to

diſcharge

diſcharge whatſoever his *Calling* exacts of him, and yet leave void Spaces enough in his time to do *all* that his *Religion* requires.

Neither are we obliged to be ſo *induſtrious* in our Calling as to deny our ſelves any *moderate* Refreſhments or Recreations, which are not only *uſeful*, but ſometimes *neceſſary* to *breath* our Spirits after they have been almoſt ſtifled in a Croud of Buſineſs, and *divert* our wearied Thoughts, which like the ſtrings of a Lute by being *ſlackned* now and then will ſound the ſweeter when they are *wound up* again. But then we ought to take care that we do not turn our *Phyſick* into *Food*, and make that our *Buſineſs* which ſhould be only our *Diverſion*; that our Recreations be *ſhort* and apt to *refreſh*, but not to *ſteal away* our Minds from ſeverer Employments. For *long* Sports and Recreations are like a *large* Entry to a *little* Houſe, they take up ſo much Room in the *narrow* Compaſs of our Time, that there is not Space enough left in it for the more *uſeful* Apartments, and ſo far as our Sports do exceed the Meaſures of *neceſſary* and *convenient* Recreation, they are *unwarrantable* Encroachments upon our Calling and Religion. 'Tis true, as for the Meaſures of *Convenience*, they are not alike to *all*; for as for thoſe whoſe large Fortunes have placed them beyond the Neceſſities of the World, they may *conveniently* allow themſelves *larger* Portions of Recreation than thoſe of meaner Circumſtances, who having not yet made a competent proviſion for their Families, are obliged in Juſtice to a more *conſtant* Induſtry, leſt they fall under S. *Paul*'s Cenſure of being *worſe than Infidels*. But how plentiful ſoever

our outward Condition may be, it will by no means warrant us either to live *idly*, or to make our *Recreations* our continual Employments; but the more Leiſure we have from ſecular *Buſineſs*, the greater Portions of our Time we ought to conſecrate to Religion, and ſince our *Bodies* and our *Families* are ſo liberally provided for, to be ſo much the more induſtrious in ſupplying the Neceſſities of our *Souls*, that ſo *theſe* may not be the only *miſerable* things about us. But then our Natures being ſo *depraved*, as that they cannot dwell long on the ſevere Exerciſes of Religion, and yet ſo *active* as that, if in the Intervals of our Religion they be not *Innocently* imployed, they will be apt to run into *Miſchief*, 'tis in our own Defence neceſſary, how proſperous ſoever our outward Condition may be, that we ſhould find out ſome *honeſt* Buſineſs or other to keep our Activity *regularly* Exerciſed. And this will be no hard matter for us to do, conſidering how many *generous*, *liberal*, and *ingenuous* Employments there are, fit for perſons of the higheſt Rank and Condition. They may dedicate ſuch Portions of their Time to the uſeful Studies of *Philoſophy* or *Hiſtory*, or of the *Laws* and *Cuſtoms* of their own Country; and ſuch to the *Inſpection* of their own Eſtates, or to *overlook* and *govern* their Families, and ſuch to *examine* the Complaints of their Tenants, or the Neceſſities of their Neighbours, or to *reconcile* Differences or *conciliate* Love and good Neighbourhood among thoſe that are near or under them; in theſe and ſuch like Employments they may *innocently* exerciſe their active Minds, and thereby not only divert themſelves from *ſinful* Courſes,

Courſes, but alſo render themſelves very *uſeful* to the World.

But whatſoever our Condition in the World may be, it muſt doubtleſs be of very dangerous Conſequence to our Religion not to be *innocently* and *uſefully* imployed. For as the wiſe *Cato* hath obſerved, *Nihil agendo, male agere diſces, i.e.* by accuſtoming your ſelf to do *nothing*, you will moſt certainly learn to do *ill*. For your *buſie* Mind, like Nature, will admit of no *Vacuum*, but muſt be *always full* of one thing or other; and it can no ſooner diſmiſs its *pious* or *honeſt* thoughts, but *vicious* and *unlawful* ones will be ſwarming about it. For *religious*, *lawful*, and *ſinful* Objects, are the only Companions our Minds have to converſe with, and therefore ſince they muſt and will be converſing with *one* thing or *other*, we ought to take great care that as ſoon as ever they have done entertaining *religious* Objects, they be preſently ſupplied and preſented with *lawful* ones, with ſome *honeſt* Buſineſs, or *innocent* Diverſion; that ſo we may not be at leiſure to attend to thoſe *ſinful* Objects, which in the others Abſence will be perpetually *crouding* and *thruſting* themſelves upon us. For when we are neither *honeſtly* nor *religiouſly* imployed, we ſhall be perfectly at leiſure to attend to any Invitation to Sin; and ſince we muſt ſtill be doing one thing or other, our having nothing *elſe* to do, will be a ſtrong inducement to do that which is *evil*, and to ſpend our reſtleſs activity in ſome *irregular* Courſe or other, accordingly as we are *tempted* and *inclined*. If we are of a *buſie* and *pragmatical* Temper, our leiſure will preſently invite us to be

intermedling with other Folks Buſineſs, to be *tampering* with State Affairs and caſting new Models of Government, and *cenſuring* the Wiſdom of thoſe publick Adminiſtrations of which we do not underſtand the Reaſons: If we are of a *froward*, *peeviſh*, and *untractable* Temper, we ſhall be apt, when we have nothing elſe to do, to be venting our Activity in *factious* and *turbulent* Zeal, in *ſeditious* Pratings and Conſpiracies, in *backbiting* our Adverſaries, and *fetching* and *carrying* ſcandalous Reports to create Jealouſies and Animoſities between Neighbour and Neighbour. In a word, if we are of *ſanguine* and *jovial* Diſpoſitions, our idle hours will be ſo many tempting Opportunities to *Intemperance* and *Wantonneſs*, *Prophaneneſs* and *Scurrility*, and all the other Wickedneſſes of a *lewd* and *diſſolute* Converſation. If therefore we mean to be ſecured from *ſinful* Actions, we muſt allow our ſelves no leiſure from *religious* or *honeſt* ones, which for the above-named Reaſon, we ſhall find utterly unpracticable, if we be not *diligent* and *induſtrious* in ſome honeſt Calling.

But whilſt mens Minds are *honeſtly* imployed, they will not be at leiſure to liſten to Temptation; and 'twill be difficult for any of thoſe Inducements to Sin, which the Devil and outward Objects do perpetually ſuggeſt to us, to obtain Admittance to *ſpeak* with our Thoughts, whilſt they are thus taken up with *wiſer* and *better* Company. But as ſoon as we diſmiſs *theſe*, we do in effect beckon Temptations to our ſelves, and *invite* the Devil and the World to *invite* us to be wicked. For, as we ſay, *Opportunity makes the Thief*, *i. e.* it tempts

tempts him to ſteal; ſo when we give the Devil the Opportunity of an *idle* Hour, we do thereby tempt *him* to tempt *us*, and importunately invite him to *ſteal* away the Treaſure of our Innocence, by putting the *Key* of it into his hand, and giving him a free *Acceſs* to it. And though we ſhould be firmly *reſolved* not to ſin, yet 'tis impoſſible we ſhould be *ſafe* ſo long as we are at leiſure to be *tempted*; becauſe while we are *at leiſure* we ſhall be very often *diſputing* and *holding* Argument with the Tempter, who by his *Quirks* and *Sophiſtrics* will many times circumvent ſuch *Novices* as we, before we are aware. But when we are not only *reſolved* againſt him, but are alſo ſo *imployed* as that we are not at leiſure to attend to him, it is paſt his skill to faſten any Temptation upon us. Wherefore, if we would be ſecure in the Courſe of our Chriſtian Warfare, we muſt follow S. *Jerom*'s Counſel to his Friend *Ruſticus*, *Semper boni aliquid operis facito, ut Diabolus te ſemper inveniat occupatum*, Be always doing one good Work or other, that ſo the Devil may always find thee buſie.

IX. To our *Courſe* and *Progreſs* in the Chriſtian Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould endeavour, ſo far as in us lies, to keep up a conſtant *Chearfulneſs* of *Spirit* in our Religion. It is doubtleſs a great Diſgrace to our Religion to imagine (as too many *ſuperſtitious* Chriſtians do) that it is an Enemy to *Mirth* and *Chearfulneſs*, and a ſevere Exactor of *Penſive* Looks and *ſolemn* Faces; that men are never ſerious enough till they are *moped* into Statues, and *cloiſter'd* from all Society, but that of their own melancholy Thoughts; that

'tis a Goſpel-Duty to *whine* or to be *ſilent*, and retire themſelves from the moſt innocent *Pleaſures* and *Feſtivities* of Converſation; and in a word, that all kind of *Mirth* and *facetious* Humour is to be rankt among thoſe *Idle Words* which our Saviour tells us ſhall be brought to Judgment. As if Religion were a *Caput mortuum*, a heavy, ſtark, inſipid thing, that had neither *Heat*, nor *Life*, nor *Motion* in it; or were intended for a *Meduſa*'s Head to transform men into Monuments of Stone. By which *falſe* Conceptions of it, they render it much more burthenſom than it is in its *own* Nature. For to make Religion forbid us any thing that is *humane* and *natural*, is to render it a real *grievance* unto humane nature; 'tis to make our *Duty* run a tilt at the Principles of our *Being*, and ſet our *Conſcience* and our *Nature* at Variance with one another. And therefore, ſince to be *riſible* and *ſociable*, is as natural to us as to be *reaſonable*, to make our *Religion* an Enemy to our *Mirth* and *Converſation*, is to repreſent it as a tyrannical Invader of the eſſential *Liberties* and *Properties* of humane Nature. 'Tis true indeed, though it denies us not the freedom of an *innocent* Humour, nor diſallows thoſe little *Plaiſances* and inoffenſive *Raileries* of Fancy which are ſometimes requiſite to *ſauce* our Converſation, and give it a *quicker* Reliſh; yet hath it taken care to bound our Merriments with the neceſſary Precepts of *Sobriety* and *Gravity*, that ſo by too much whifling up and down in the little *levities* of Fancy, our Minds may not grow *vain*, and *light* and *trifling*, and be thereby indiſpoſed to *ſerious* Thoughts and Reflections: But ſo long as we keep within the

the Bounds of *Sobriety*, and do not ſally out into *malicious* or *ſcurrilous* or *prophane* Jeſting, our Religion doth not only *connive* at our Mirth, but *commend* and *approve* it: and ſo remote is it from *cramping* thoſe Strings and Sinews of the Mind, *Chearfulneſs* and *Action*, that it *recollects* their ſcatter'd Vigour, and *winds up* their Slackneſs to a true Harmony.

For it requires that our *ſpeech ſhould be alway with grace*, Col. iv. 6. *i. e.* as ſome Expoſitors underſtand the Phraſe, that it would not be *whining* and *melancholy*, but *ſprightly* and *chearful*; it bids us *rejoyce evermore*, 1 Theſ. v. 16. and *rejoyce in the Lord alway, and again rejoyce*, Phil. iv. 4. that is, to endeavour to be chearful in all Conditions, and to bear all Events with a *ſerene* and *lightſom* mind. And therefore the Apoſtle reckons this among the bleſſed fruits and Effects of that Divine Spirit which accompanies and animates Chriſtianity, *viz. Joy*, or *Chearfulneſs*, Gal. v. 22. and this is one of the Particulars in which the ſame Apoſtle makes the *Chriſtian* Laws to conſiſt, as they ſtand oppoſed to the *Ritual* Laws of the Jews; *the Kingdom of heaven, i. e.* the Laws of the Chriſtian Church, *is not meat and drink, i. e.* conſiſts not of Injunctions or Prohibitions of things that are of a *Ritual* or *indifferent* Nature; *but righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. xiv. 17. which three Particulars being oppoſed to things that are *unneceſſary*, muſt by the Law of Oppoſitions denote things that are *neceſſary*; and therefore as by *Righteouſneſs* and *Peace*, muſt be meant *Juſtice* and *Peaceableneſs*, ſo by *Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, muſt be meant *Chearfulneſs* and *Alacrity* in doing

doing the will of God; becauſe *Joy* can be in no other Senſe Matter of *Neceſſary* Duty. By all which it is evident, that *Chearfulneſs* of Temper is ſo far from being *diſcountenanced* by our Religion, that 'tis *required* and *injoyned* by it, ſo far as 'tis in our Power and Choice. And indeed it highly becomes us who ſerve ſo good a Maſter, to be *free* and *chearful*, and thereby to expreſs a grateful ſenſe of his Goodneſs, and of thoſe glorious Rewards which we expect from his inexhauſtible Bounty; but as for a *gloomy* Look and *dejected* Countenance, it better beſeems a Gally-ſlave than a Servant of God. And as *Chearfulneſs* is a Duty that very well *becomes* our State, ſo it is highly *neceſſary* to ſupport and carry us on in our Chriſtian Warfare.

For *Chearfulneſs* is Natures beſt Friend; it *removes* its Oppreſſions, *enlivens* its Faculties, and keeps its Spirits in a *brisk* and *regular* Motion, and hereby renders it *eaſie* to it ſelf, and *uſeful* and *ſerviceable* to God and Man. It diſpels *Clouds* from the Mind, and *Fears* from the Heart, and kindles and cheriſhes in us *brave* and *generous* Affections, and compoſes our Natures into ſuch a *regular* temper as is of all others the moſt fit to receive religious Impreſſions, and the breathings of the Spirit of God. For what the Jews do obſerve of the Spirit of *Prophecy*, is as true of the Spirit of *Holineſs*, that it dwells not with *Sadneſs*, but with *Chearfulneſs*; that being it ſelf of a *calm* and *gentle* Nature, it loves not to reſide with *black* and *melancholy* Paſſions, but requires a *compoſed* and *ſerene* Temper to act upon. And hence *Tertul.* in his *de Spect. Deus præcepit Spiritum Sanctum,*

ut pote

utpote pro Naturæ ſuæ bono tenerum & delicatum, Tranquillitate & Lenitate & Quiete & Pace tractare; non Furore, non Bile, non Ira, non Dolore inquietare, i. e. God hath commanded that the Holy Spirit, who is of a tender and delicate *Nature*, ſhould be entertained by us with Tranquillity and Mildneſs, with Quietneſs and Peace, and that we ſhould take care not to diſturb him with Fury and Choler, or with Anger and Grief. And indeed, Melancholy naturally infeſts the Holy Spirit, and diſturbs him in all his operations; it overwhelms the Fancy with *black* Reeks and Vapours, and thereby *clouds* and *darkens* the Underſtanding, and *intercepts* the holy Spirits Illuminations; and, like red coloured Glaſs before the eye, cauſes the moſt *lovely* and *attractive* Objects to look *bloudy* and *terrible*. It *diſtracts* the Thoughts, and renders them *wild*, *roving*, and *incoherent*; and thereby utterly *indiſpoſes* them to Prayer and Conſideration, and renders them *deaf* and *unattentive* to all good Motions and Inſpirations. It *freezes* up the Heart with *deſpairing* Fears and Deſpondencies, and repreſents *eaſie* things as *difficult* to us, and *difficult* as *impoſſible*, and thereby *diſcourages* us from all thoſe vertuous Attempts, to which the bleſſed Spirit doth ſo importunately *excite* and *provoke* us. In a word, it naturally *benums* and *ſtupefies* the Soul, *obſtructs* its Motions, and makes it *liſtleſs* and *unactive*, and ſo by indiſpoſing it to *co-operate* with the Holy Spirit, renders it an *incapable* Subject of his divine grace and Influence. Thus melancholy you ſee, by its *ſullen* and *malevolent* Aſpects, doth obſtinately *reſiſt* and *counter-influence* the Holy Spirit, without whoſe Aid and Aſſiſtance

ſtance we can never hope to proſper in our ſpiritual Warfare.

Wherefore if we mean to ſucceed in this great Affair, it concerns us to uſe all honeſt and innocent Means to diſpel this *black* and *miſchievous* Humour, and to beget and maintain in our Minds a conſtant *Serenity* and *Chearfulneſs* of Temper; and when ever our Spirits begin to *droop* and *languiſh*, to betake our ſelves to ſuch *natural* Remedies, ſuch *harmleſs* Diverſions, Refreſhments and Recreations, as are fit and proper to *raiſe* them up again; and not to ſuffer them to *ſink* into a Bog of Melancholy Humours, whilſt 'tis in our Power by any honeſt Art or Invention to *ſupport* them. Which if we can but effect, will be of vaſt Advantage to us in the whole Courſe of our Religion. For in an even *Chearfulneſs* of Temper, our Spirits will be always *lively*, *ſtrong*, and *active*, and fit for the *beſt* and *nobleſt* Operations; they will give *Light* to our Underſtandings, *Courage* to our Hearts, and *Wings* to our Affections; ſo that we ſhall be able more *clearly* to diſcern divine and heavenly things, more *reſolutely* to practiſe, and more *vehemently* to aſpire after them; and our Conſiderations will be more *fixt*, our Devotions more *intent*, and all our ſpiritual Endeavours more *active* and *vivacious*. For a *chearful* Temper will repreſent every thing *chearfully* to us; 'twill repreſent God ſo *lovely*, Religion ſo *attractive*, the Rewards of it ſo *immenſe*, and the Difficulties of it ſo *inconſiderable*, and thereby inſpire us with ſo much *Life* and *Courage*, as that none of all thoſe ſpiritual Enemies we war and contend againſt, will be able to withſtand our Reſolution.

X. To

X. To our Courſe and Progreſs in this our ſpiritual Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that we maintain in our Minds a conſtant *Senſe* and *Expectation* of Heaven; that ſince things of the other World are *future* and *inviſible*, and conſequently leſs apt to *touch* and *affect* us than theſe worldly things which are continually *preſſing* upon our Senſes, we ſhould as oft as we have Opportunity, withdraw our Thoughts from theſe *ſenſible* Objects, and retire into the *immaterial* World, and there entertain our ſelves with the cloſe *View* and *Contemplation* of the Joys and Glories it abounds with. For we are a ſort of Beings that being compounded of *Fleſh* and *Spirit*, are by theſe *oppoſite* Principles of our Nature ally'd to two *oppoſite* Worlds, and placed in the middle between *Heaven* and *Earth* as the common Center wherein thoſe diſtant Regions meet. By our *ſpiritual* Nature we hold Communion with the *ſpiritual* World, and by our *corporeal* with this *earthly* and *ſenſible* one; whoſe Objects being always *preſent* with us, and *ſtriking* as they do immediately upon our Senſes, we lie much more bare and open to them, than to thoſe of the ſpiritual World. So that unleſs we now and then *withdraw* our ſelves from theſe ſenſible things, which hang like a Cloud between, we can never have a free *Proſpect* into that clear Heaven above them. And hence it becomes neceſſary that we ſhould now and then make a ſolemn *Retirement* of our Thoughts from *earthly* Objects and Enjoyments, that ſo we may approach near enough to Heaven to *touch* and *feel* the Joys and Pleaſures of it, which while we *tranſiently* behold in this croud of worldly Objects, is placed at ſuch

a Diſtance from us, that it looks like a *thin*, *blue* Landskip, next to nothing; and hath not apparent Reality enough in it to raiſe our Deſires and Expectations.

And hence we are commanded to *ſet our affections upon*, or as it is in the original, *to mind thoſe things that are above*, Col. iii. 2. and that by theſe *things above*, he means the Enjoyments of Heaven, it's plain from *ver.* 1. where he expreſly tells us, that by the *above* in which theſe things are, he means Heaven, *where Chriſt ſits at the right hand of God.* So that the Senſe of the Precept is this, that we ſhould fix in our Minds ſuch *lively* Repreſentations of the Glory and Reality of the Celeſtial State, as may raiſe in our Hearts a *longing* Deſire and *earneſt* Expectation of being made partakers of it. Which *Hope* and *Expectation* he elſewhere injoyns us to *put on for an Helmet*, *i. e.* for a neceſſary Piece of *defenſive* Armour againſt the Difficulties and Diſcouragements of our Chriſtian Warfare, 1 Theſ. v. 8. and Heb. vi. 19. *this hope which enters into that within the veil*, *i. e.* into Heaven, is ſaid to be *the Anchor of the ſoul both ſure and ſtedfaſt*, *i. e.* 'tis that which *ſtays* and *ſecures* the Soul in the midſt of thoſe many *Storms* of Temptation it meets withal in its *Voyage* to Heaven; and it being ſo, we are bid to *look to* and imitate our Bleſſed Lord, *who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the Croß*, *deſpiſing the ſhame*, *and is now ſat down at the right hand of God*, Heb. xii. 2. The meaning of all which is, that we ſhould earneſtly indeavour to *fix* in our minds a *vigorous* Senſe and Expectation of that immortal Happineſs with which God hath promiſed to crown all that come

off

off Conquerors from this ſpiritual Warfare; that all along as we *march* we ſhould keep Heaven in our *Eye*, and *incourage* our ſelves with the *Hope* of it to *charge through* all thoſe Difficulties and Temptations that oppoſe us in the way; in a word, that we ſhould frequently *awaken* in our minds the glorious *Thoughts* of a bleſſed Immortality, and poſſeſs our ſelves with a lively *Expectation* of enjoying it, if we *hold out* to the End.

Which is a Duty of a vaſt Conſequence to us in the *Courſe* of our ſpiritual Warfare. For Heaven being the *End* and *Reward* of our Warfare, muſt needs be the grand *Encouragement* thereunto; and conſequently if once we *loſe Sight* of Heaven, and ſuffer *earthly* things to *interpoſe* and *eclipſe* the Glory and Reality of it, our Courage will never be able to *bear up* againſt thoſe manifold Temptations that do continually aſſault us. But whilſt we continue under a *lively Senſe* of that bleſſed Recompence of Reward, *that* will ſo *ſpirit* and *invigorate* our Reſolution, that nothing will be able to *withſtand* it; and all the *Terrors* and *Allurements* that Sin can propoſe, will be forced to *fly* before it, and to *retreat* like ſo many impotent Waves that daſh againſt a Rock of Adamant. For while we are under a lively Senſe and Expectance of the Happineſs above, we live as it were in the *Midway* between Heaven and Earth, where we have an open Proſpect of the Glories of *both*, and do plainly ſee how *faint* and *dim* theſe *below* are in compariſon with thoſe *above*; how they are forced to *ſneak* and *diſappear* in the preſence of thoſe eternal *Splendors*, and to *ſhrowd* their *vanquiſht* Beauties,

Beauties, as the Stars do when the Sun appears. And whilſt we *interchangeably* turn our eyes from one to t'other, how fruitleſly do the *Pleaſures*, *Profits*, and *Honours* below, importune us to abandon the *Joys* and *Glories* above, and with what Indignation do we liſten to the propoſals of ſuch a *ſenſeleſs* and *ridiculous* Exchange? And could we but always keep our ſelves at this ſtand, we ſhould be ſo *fortified* with the Sight of thoſe happy Regions *above*, that no Temptation from *below* would ever be able to *approach* us; and the ſenſe that we are going on to that bleſſed State would carry us through all the *weary* Stages of our Duty with an *indefatigable* Vigour. For what may a man not do with Heaven in his *Eye*, with that *potent*, I had almoſt ſaid *Omnipotent*, Encouragement before him? To *pull out* a right Eye, to *cut off* a right hand, to *tear* a darling Luſt from his Heart, even when 'tis *wrapt* about it, and *twiſted* with its Strings, what an *eaſie* Atchievement is it to a man that hath a Heaven of immortal Glories in his *View?* The Hope of which is enough to recommend even *Racks* and *Torments*, and turn the Flames of Martyrdom into a Bed of Roſes. For 'twas this bleſſed Proſpect that inabled the good old *Martyrs* to *triumph* ſo gloriouſly as they did in the midſt of their Sufferings; they knew that a few Moments would put an End to their Miſeries, and that when once they had *weather'd* thoſe ſhort *ſtorms*, they ſhould arrive at a moſt bleſſed *Harbour*, and be crowned at their *landing*; and that from thence they ſhould look back with infinite Joy and Delight upon the dangerous *Sea* they had eſcaped, and for ever bleſs thoſe *Storms* and *Winds* that

that drave them to that happy *Port*, for as the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, *they ſought a heavenly Country*, Heb. xi. 14, 16.

XI. And laſtly, To the ſucceſsful *Progreſs* of our Chriſtian Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould live in the *frequent* uſe of the *publick Ordinances* and *Inſtitutions* of our Religion; namely, in the religious Obſervation of the *Lords Day*, and in frequent *Communion* with one another in the *Holy Sacrament*, both which are of great Uſe to us in the *Courſe* & *Progreſs* of our ſpiritual Warfare. For as for the *Lords Day*, it is *inſtituted*, and ever ſince the Apoſtles time hath been *obſerved* in the Chriſtian Church, as a Day of *publick* Worſhip and *weekly* Thankſgiving for our Saviours *Reſurrection*, in which the great Work of our Redemption was *conſummated*. And certainly it muſt needs be of vaſt Advantage to be *one* day in *ſeven* ſequeſtred from the World, and imployed in *divine* Offices, in ſolemn *Prayers*, *Praiſes*, and *Thankſgivings*, and to be obliged to *aſſiſt* and *edifie* one another by the mutual *Example* and *Union* of our Devotions; to hear the Duties of our Religion *explained*, the Sins againſt it *reprehended*, and the Doctrines of it *unfolded* and *reduced* to plain and eaſie Principles of Practice; what a mighty advantage might we reap from all theſe bleſſed *Miniſteries*, if we would but attend to them with that *Concern* and *Serioufneſs* which the matter of them *requires* and *deſerves*? Eſpecially if when the *publick* Offices are over, we would not *let looſe* our ſelves all the reſt of the Day, as we too frequently do, to our *ſecular* Cares and Diverſions, and thereby *choak* thoſe good Inſtructions we have

heard, and *ſtifle* thoſe devout and pious Affections which have been raiſed and excited in us; but inſtead of ſo doing, we would devote at leaſt ſome good Portion of it to the *Inſtruction* of our Families, and to the *private* Exerciſe of our Religion, to *Meditation* and *Prayer*, to the *Examination* of our ſelves concerning our *paſt* Behaviour, and the *reinforcing* our Reſolution to behave our ſelves better for the future; if, I ſay, we would thus ſpend our *Lords Day*, we ſhould doubtleſs find our ſelves *better* men for it all the *Week* after; we ſhould go into the World again with much *better* Affections, and *ſtronger* Reſolutions, with our Graces more *vigorous*, and our bad Inclinations more *reduced* and *tamed*, and whereas the Jews were to gather *Manna* enough on their *ſixth* Day, to feed their *Bodies* on the enſuing *Sabbath*, we ſhould gather *Manna* enough upon our *Sabbath*, to feed and ſtrengthen our *Souls* all the *ſix days* after.

But to this we muſt alſo add frequent *Communions* with one another in the *Holy Sacrament*, which is an Ordinance *inſtituted* on purpoſe by our bleſſed Saviour, for the *improving* and *furthering* us in our Chriſtian Warfare. For beſides that herein we have one of the moſt *puiſſant* Arguments againſt Sin repreſented by *viſible* Signs to our Senſe, *viz.* the bloudy *Sacrifice* of our bleſſed Lord to *expiate* and make *Atonement* for it; beſides that thoſe *bleeding* Wounds of his which are here repreſented by the *breaking* of the *Bread*, and *pouring out* of the *Wine*, do proclaim our Sins his *Aſſaſſines* and *Murderers*, the thought of which, if we had any ingenuity in us, were enough to

incenſe

incenſe in us the moſt *implacable* Indignation againſt them; beſides that, his ſufferings for our Sins, of which this ſacred *Solemnity* is a *lively* Picture, do horribly *remonſtrate* Gods *Diſpleaſure* againſt them, who would not be induced to pardon them upon any *meaner* Expiation than the Bloud of his Son, than which *Hell* it ſelf is not a more *dreadful* Argument to *ſcare* and *terrifie* us from them; in a word, beſides that, his ſo freely *ſubmitting* and *offering* up himſelf to be a *Propitiation* for us, of which this holy Feſtival is a ſolemn *Commemoration*, is an expreſſion of *Kindneſs* ſufficient to *captivate* the moſt *ungrateful* Souls, and *extort* Obedience from them; beſides all this, I ſay, as it is a *Feaſt* upon the *Sacrifice* of his Body and Bloud, it is a Federal Rite, whereby God and we, by *feaſting* together, do, according to the antient Cuſtoms both of *Jews* and *Heathens*, mutually *oblige* our ſelves to one another; whereby God, by *giving* us the *myſtical* Bread and Wine, and we by *receiving* them, do mutually *ingage* our ſelves to one another upon thoſe ſacred Pledges of Chriſt's Body and Bloud, that we will *faithfully* perform each others Part of that everlaſting *Covenant* which was purchaſed by him. And what can be a greater *Reſtraint* to us when we are ſolicited to any Sin, than the ſenſe of being under ſuch a dreadful *Vow* and *Obligation*? With what face *dare* we liſten to any Temptation to Evil, when we remember how lately we ſolemnly *ingaged* our ſelves to the contrary, and took the *Sacrament* upon it? And verily I doubt 'tis *this* that lies at the bottom of that ſeeming *modeſt* pretence of *unworthineſs*, which men are wont to urge in Excuſe for their

Neglect of the Sacrament; namely, that they *love* their Luſts, and cannot reſolve to *part* with them, and therefore are *afraid* to make ſuch a ſolemn *Abjuration* of them, as the eating and drinking the conſecrated Elements implies. And I confeſs, if *this* be their Reaſon, they are *unworthy* indeed, the more *ſhame* for them, but 'tis ſuch an *Unworthineſs* as is ſo far from *excuſing*, that it only *aggravates* their neglect. For, for any man to plead that he *dares* not receive the Sacrament becauſe he is reſolved to *ſin on*, is to make that which is his *Fault*, his *Apology*, and to excuſe *one* Sin with *another*. Wherefore if we are heartily *reſolved* by the Grace of God to *reform* and *amend*, let us abſtain no longer from this great Federal Rite, upon Pretence of *Unworthineſs*. For 'tis by the uſe of *this*, among *other* Means, that we are to *improve* and grow more and more *worthy*. For the very *Repetition* of our Reſolution, as I have ſhewed above, is a proper Means of *ſtrengthening* and *confirming* it; and certainly it muſt needs be much more ſo, when 'tis *renewed* and *repeated* with the Solemnity of a Sacrament. And therefore it is worth obſerving, how much Care our Lord hath taken, in the very conſtitution of our Religion, to oblige us to a *conſtant*, *ſolemn* Repetition of our good Reſolutions. For at our firſt entrance into *Covenant* with him, we are to be *baptized*, in which Solemnity we do openly *renounce* the Devil and all his Works, and religiouſly *devote* our ſelves to his ſervice. But becauſe we are apt to *forget* this our Baptiſmal *Vow*, and the *Matter* of it is *continually* to be performed, and more than *one* world depends upon it, therefore he hath thought fit not to

truſt

truſt wholly to this *firſt* Engagement, but hath ſo methodiz'd our Religion, as that we are ever and anon obliged to give him *new* Security. For which End, he hath inſtituted this *other* Sacrament, which is not like that of *Baptiſm*, to be received by us *once for all*, but to be often *reiterated* and *repeated*, that ſo upon the frequent *Returns* of it, we might ſtill be obliged to *repeat* over our old Vows of Obedience. For he hath not only injoyned us that we ſhould *do this in remembrance of him*, Luke xxii. 19. *i. e.* that we ſhould celebrate this ſacred Feſtival in the Memory of his Paſſion; but by thus doing the Apoſtle tells us we are to *continue* the Memorial of it to the end of the world, or *to ſhew his death till he comes*, 1 Cor. xi. 26. And that this doth not, like the Precept of *Baptiſm*, oblige us for *once* only and no more, is evident from the foregoing words of this laſt recited Text, *as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup*, which plainly ſhews, that theſe ſacramental Elements are to be *more* than *once* received by us. 'Tis true, how *often* 'tis to be done neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles have any where *defined*, but if we conſult *Primitive Example* (which in the Abſence of *expreſs* Precept is the *beſt* Rule to determine our ſelves by) we ſhall find that it was very *frequently* received. For from ſome Paſſages in the Acts of the Apoſtles, it ſeems *probable* that Chriſtians did then communicate *every Day*; as particularly *Acts* ii. 46. where they are ſaid *to continue daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread*, κατ' οἶκον, *in the houſe*, that is, as it ſeems *probable*, in ſome upper room of the Temple; though *perhaps* this *daily* may refer only to the

Lords Day, agreeable to that Acts xx. 7. *on the first day of the week when the Disciples came together to break bread*, Paul *preached unto them.* But it's *certain* that whensoever they assembled to the *publick* Worship, they closed it with the *Lords Supper*; which they did for a great while in the *Western* Churches *every day* in the Week, and in the *Eastern*, as St. *Basil* tells us, Epist. 289. *four times* a Week, besides *Festivals.* So that allowing for our *Declensions* from the *Primitive* Zeal and Devotion, one would think that to communicate now *once* in *four* Weeks should be a very *moderate* Proportion. But as for those that *wholly* neglect this sacred Institution, for my own part I see not how they can *excuse* themselves from being guilty of a wilful *Rebellion* against their Saviour, or with what Confidence they can expect either that he should *assist* them with his *Grace* on the *Way*, or *crown* them with his *Salvation* in the End, when they so *perversly* turn their backs upon an Ordinance which he hath solemnly instituted for a *Conveyance* of the *one*, and a *Seal* of the *other*.

But would we take that Care that becomes us, to *prepare* our selves for, and *frequent* his holy Institution, there is no doubt but we should find it of mighty Advantage to us in the whole *Course* of our Religion. For till we are arrived to a *confirmed* State of Good, our holy Fervours will be very apt to *cool*, our good Purposes to *slacken* and *unwind*, and our vertuous Endeavours to *languish* and *tire*; and therefore unless we take care frequently to *revive* our Religion with this spiritual *Repast* and *Restorative*, and still to add *new* Fewel to it as the Flame decays, it will quickly *pine away* and

and *expire*. But if upon the *ſolemn* Returns of this ſacred Feſtival, we would *conſtantly* come with due Preparation to our Maſters Table, and here *renew* our Vows, *re-invigorate* our reſolutions, *repair* our Decays, and put our *ſluggiſh* Graces into a new *Fermentation*, we ſhould find our Religion not only *live*, but *thrive*, and be ſtill acquiring *new* Degrees of Strength and Activity. But becauſe this Argument hath been already ſo fully handled in our Practical Treatiſes, particularly by the Reverend Dr. *Patrick* in his *Menſa Myſtica* and *Chriſtian Sacrifice*, I ſhall refer the Reader thither for the farther Conſideration of it.

And thus, with all the Brevity I could, I have indeavoured to give an Account of thoſe *Duties* which are neceſſary in the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our *Chriſtian Warfare*.

SECT. IV.

Containing certain Motives *to animate men againſt the* Difficulty *of theſe* Duties *which appertain to the* Courſe *of our* Chriſtian Warfare.

How *neceſſary* and *uſeful* to us thoſe aforenamed Duties are, in the *Courſe* of our Chriſtian Warfare, hath been ſufficiently ſhewn. So that now there is nothing that our *Sloth* and *Unwillingneſs* can object againſt them, but only this, that they are very *difficult*, and do require more of our *Time*, and *Care*, and *Pains* than we can conveniently ſpare from our other neceſſary Occaſions; that the Practice of them is ſo *unpleaſant* and

severe, and attended with so much *Cumber* and *Trouble*, that we very much doubt we shall never be able to *go through* with them. And therefore to remove this Objection out of mens way, and to excite them to the Practice of these necessary Duties, I shall for a Conclusion of this Argument add, to what hath been said of it, these following *Considerations*.

1. That whatsoever *Difficulty* there is in the Practice of them, we may *thank our selves* for it.

2. That in the *Course* of our *Sin* there is a great deal of *Difficulty*, as well as in our Warfare *against* it.

3. That how *difficult* soever this Warfare may be, it must be *indured*, or that which is a great deal *worse*.

4. That though it be *difficult*, yet there is nothing in it but what the Grace of God will render *possible* to us, if we be not *wanting* to our selves.

5. That the Practice of these *Duties* is not so *difficult*, but that it is fairly consistent with all our other necessary *Occasions* and *Diversions*.

6. That the *Difficulty* is such as will certainly *abate* and *wear off* by Degrees, if we *constantly* practise them.

7. That with the *difficulty* of them there is a world of present *Peace* and *Satisfaction* intermingled.

8. That their *Difficulty* is abundantly *compensated* by the final *Reward* of them.

I. Con-

I. Conſider that whatſoever *Difficulty* there is in the Practice of them, we may *thank our ſelves* for it. For if we had betaken our ſelves to the Practice of Religion as ſoon as we were *capable* of it, before we had *entered* our ſelves into ſinful Courſes, and had *therein* contracted ſinful Habits and Inclinations, we might have *prevented* thoſe Difficulties which we now *complain of*. For our Religion was made *for* and adapted *to* our Nature, and would have ſweetly *accorded* with all its Affections and Propenſions, had we not *vitiated* them by our own wilful Sin, and clapt a *preternatural* Biaſs upon them. But though the Light be *naturally* congruous to the Eye, yet if through a Diſtillation of ill Humours into it the Eye grow *ſore* and *weak*, there is nothing more *grievous* and *offenſive* to it. And ſo it is with Religion, which to the *pure* and *uncontaminated* Nature of a Man, is the moſt *grateful* and *agreeable* thing in the World; but if by our own ill Government we *diſeaſe* our Nature, and *deprave* its Primitive Conſtitution, it is no wonder that Religion which was ſo well *proportioned* to it in its *Purity*, ſhould ſit *hard* and *uneaſie* upon it, in its *Apoſtaſie* and Corruption. For to a man that is in a *Feaver*, every thing is *bitter*, even Honey, which when he is *well*, is exceeding *ſweet* and *grateful*; but the *Bitterneſs* which he taſtes is not in the *Honey*, but in the *Gall* which overflows his own Palate; and ſo to a Nature that is *diſeaſed* with any unnatural Luſt, that which is moſt *congruous* to *it ſelf*, will be moſt *naufeous* to its *Diſeaſe*, and thoſe Duties which in its *Health* 'twould have imbraced with the greateſt *Pleaſure*, will in its *Sickneſs* be the

the greateſt *Burthen* and *Oppreſſion* to it. And when we have ſpoiled the *Purity* of our Conſtitution, and are *degenerated* from the *humane* Nature into the *brutal* or *diabolical*, it is no great wonder that the Religion of a *Man* ſhould be a Burthen to the Nature of a *Beaſt* or a *Devil*. So that whatſoever *Difficulties* there are in Religion, they ariſe not out of the Nature of the *things* it requires, but out of the perverſe *Indiſpoſitions* of our Natures to them; and theſe were for the moſt part contracted by *our ſelves*; ſo that inſtead of *complaining* of the Difficulty, we ought to *ſtrive* and *contend* the more earneſtly againſt it, becauſe we may *thank our ſelves* for it. When a man hath plaid the Fool, and ſet his Houſe *on Fire*, the Senſe of his own Folly ought to make him more induſtrious to *extinguiſh* it; but if inſtead of ſo doing, he ſhould ſit with his Hands in his Boſom, and complain of the Miſchief, and the Difficulty of *ſtopping* it, what would Folks ſay of him? Miſchievous Creature, doth it become thee to ſit here *idly* complaining of the effect of thy own Villany, whilſt 'tis yet in thy Power, wouldſt thou but *beſtir* thy ſelf, to *quench* the Flame, and prevent the *ſpreading* of it? For ſhame get up and do thy utmoſt Endeavour to *repair* thy *own* Act, and to extinguiſh this ſpreading Miſchief of which thou art the *Author*. Since therefore we have been ſo obſtinately fooliſh as to *ſet fire* to our own Souls, and *kindle* in them by our vicious Courſes ſuch deſtructive *Flames* of unnatural Luſt, how monſtrouſly *ridiculous* is it, whilſt 'tis yet in our Power to extinguiſh them, to ſit *whining* and *complaining* of the Difficulty of it, and in the mean

mean time permit them to *rage* and *burn on* without Interruption? O miſerable men, if they are ſo *hard* to be quenched, who may ye *thank* for it? Was it not you that kindled them, and do you ſit idly *complaining* of your own Act, when you ſhould be the more induſtrious to *repair* the Miſchief of it, becauſe it is *your own*. For ſhame *ariſe* and *beſtir* your ſelves, and ſince you are conſcious that the *Difficulties* of your Religion are of your own *creating*, and that thoſe Luſts which *indiſpoſe* ye to it are the products of your own *Actions*, let this excite ye to a more *vigorous* Endeavour to *ſubdue* and *conquer* them.

II. Conſider that in the *Courſe* of your *Sins* there is a great deal of *Difficulty*, as well as in your Warfare *againſt* them. For I dare appeal to your own Experience whether you have not found a great deal of *Hardſhip* in Wickedneſs, eſpecially while you were *educating* and *training up* your Natures to it? Did not your Nature oftentimes *recoil* and *ſtart* and *boggle* at your vicious Actions; and were you not fain ſometimes to *curb*, and ſometimes to *ſpur* it, to commit many *Outrages* and *Violences* upon it, whilſt you were *backing* and *managing* it, before you could reduce it to a *Through-pace* in Iniquity; How often have you put your *modeſt* Nature to the *Bluſh*, at the ſenſe of a *filthy* and *uncomely* Action, whilſt your wicked Will hath been dragging it along like a *timorous* Virgin to an Adulterers Bed; and what terrible *Shrieks* have your Conſciences many times given in the midſt of your ſinful Commiſſions, when you were acting the firſt *Rapes* upon your Innocence? How many a *penſive* Mood hath the *Review* of your

your sinful Pleasures cost you, and what *Swarms* of Horror and dreadful Expectation hath the *Reflection* on your past Guilts raised in your Minds? And then with what excessive *Difficulty* have you been fain to practise some Vices, only to get an *Habit* of practising them more *easily*; How often have you been forced to *swallow* Sickness, to drink dead *Palsies* and foaming *Epilepsies*, to render your Intemperances *familiar* to you, and in what *Qualms*, and *fainting* sweats, and *sottish* Confusions have you many times awaked, before ever you could Connaturalize your *midnight* Revels to your Temper? And when with so much *Labour* and *Violence*, you have pretty well *trained* and *exercised* your selves in this hellish Warfare, and thereby rendred it *natural* and *habitual* to you, to how many Inconveniences hath it daily *exposed* you, and what *base* and *unmanly* Shifts hath it put you upon, to *extricate* your selves out of those *Difficulties* wherein it hath *involved* you? What violent *Passions* and *Perturbations* doth it raise in your Minds, and into what *wild* Tumults of Action doth it frequently *hurry* you? In a word, how doth it *perplex* and *intrigue* the whole Course of your Lives, and *intangle* ye in a Labyrinth of *Knavish* Tricks and Collusions; so that many times you are at your *Wits end*, and know not which way to *turn* your selves? All *these* Difficulties, and a great many *more*, which I cannot presently think of, you must have contended with in a *sinful* Course of Action, if you have made any considerable Experiment of it.

And do you complain of the *Difficulty* of persevering in Religion; *you* that have so *couragiously* persevered

perſevered in a *worſe* way againſt Difficulties that are as *great*, all things conſidered, if not *greater*; *you* that have hitherto ſin'd on ſo *induſtriouſly*, that have broke through ſo many ſtrong *Barricadoes* to come at and injoy your Luſts, are *you* not aſhamed to *ſtart* and *boggle* as you do, at the Difficulties of Virtue and Religion? Look but how the *induſtrious* Sinner *upbraids* you? His way *leads* directly to *Ruine*, and he *knows* it, and yet he *preſſes on* couragiouſly, as if he were ambitious to be a *Heroe* in Iniquity, and *charges* through all the *modeſty* of Humane Nature, through all his native *ſenſe* of a God and a Divine Vengeance; he *marches* forward through *Infamy* and *Diſeaſes*, through *Dangers* and a world of *Inconveniences*, and offers a kind of *Violence* to *Hell*, as if he meant to *force* open its brazen Portal, and enter *headlong* into it before 'tis ready to receive him, whilſt you in the mean time, like a company of *Creſt-faln* Creatures, ſtand *ſhivering* at a few trifling Difficulties in your way, though you have *Heaven* for your *End*, and a *Crown* of Glory for your Reward.

In ſhort therefore, this is the true State of your Caſe; chuſe which ſide you pleaſe, whether to march under *Chriſts*, or the *Devils* Banner; you muſt expect before-hand to encounter *ſome* Difficulties, yea, and perhaps as *great* on the *one* ſide as on the *other*; and if ſo, then you have little elſe to do but to compare their *Ends*, and to conſider which of the two is moſt *eligible*, a Crown of *Glory*, or eternal *Torment*.

III. Conſider that how *Difficult* ſoever this your ſpiritual Warfare may be, it muſt be *indured*,

or

or that which is much more *intolerable*. I confeſs were it not abſolutely *neceſſary*, we might with ſome colour of Reaſon urge the *Difficulty* of it, to *excuſe* our ſelves from *undertaking* and *proſecuting* it; but when our Caſe is ſuch, as that we muſt either *conquer* or *periſh*, *ſwim* through, or *ſink* under the Difficulties we *complain* of, the matter will admit of no further *Debate*, but we muſt e'en reſolve of the *two* evils to *chuſe* that which is the *leaſt*. When the Ship hath *ſprung* a Leak, 'tis a madneſs for the Mariners to ſit ſtill and complain of the *Pains* and *Labour* of Pumping; for in the Extremity they are in, there is no more to be ſaid, they muſt *pump* or *periſh*; and it is not to be debated where there is ſo vaſt an *Inequality* between the Objects of their Choice, which of the *two* they were beſt to fix upon, whether to *take pains* for the preſent to *ſecure* the Ship, or to *ſit ſtill* and ſuffer themſelves to be *ſwallowed up* in the Ocean. And thus it is in the Caſe before us: our Soul hath ſprung a Leak, and let into its *Holds* thoſe *Stygian* Waters of *ſenſual* and *Diabolical* Luſt, which will *ſink* us down to Hell if they be not pump'd out again; and this is not to be done without a great deal of Labour and Difficulty. But what then; were we not better labour for a *while* than periſh *for ever?* Do we talk of *Labour* when our Souls are at *ſtake*, and our immortal Life is upon the Brink of an everlaſting *well* or *ill*-being? In other Caſes we never think much to endure a *preſent* Inconvenience for the Prevention of a *future* Miſchief; we are content to *faſt*, when we perceive it's neceſſary to *obviate* an approaching *Feaver*, to be *cupp'd* and *ſcarified* with all the Artifice of Pain

Pain to *prevent* or *remove* a dangerous Diſeaſe; and in all other Caſes are generally willing to prolong our Torment that we may be the longer a dying; except where the *Preſcription* is *Virtue*, and the *Death* preſcribed againſt is *eternal*; though *this* be the moſt formidable Miſchief of all, as being the utmoſt *Conſummation* of humane Miſery, and compared with which all the *Labours* and *Difficulties* of Religion have not the Proportion of a gentle *Flea-biting* to the acuteſt Torments of the *Rack* or *Stone*. For I beſeech you to conſider, will it not be eaſier for you to indure the *ſhort* Agonies of a bitter Repentance, than the horrid Deſpair of a damned Ghoſt for ever; to thwart a *fooliſh* and *unreaſonable* Luſt, than to lie *roaring* to Eternity upon the Rack of a guilty Conſcience; Is there any proportion between your *abſtaining* from the Pleaſures of Sin that are but for a *moment*, and your being *excluded* from Heaven and all Hope of Happineſs *for ever*? Alas! if it be ſo *difficult* to you to *contend* with an evil Habit, to ſtruggle with a ſtiff and obſtinate Inclination, how difficult will it be to *dwell with everlaſting burnings*, and ſuffer the dire Effects of an *unappeaſeable* Vengeance to Eternity? Wherefore ſince we are under an abſolute neceſſity of indu-ring the *one* or *th'other*, in the Name of God let us act like Men, and of the *two* evils chuſe that which is moſt *tolerable*.

IV. Conſider that though it be *difficult*, yet there is nothing in it but what the Grace of God will render *poſſible* to us, if we be not *wanting* to our ſelves. I confeſs the *Neceſſity* of it would be no Argument to ingage us to undertake it, were

it

it not a *poſſible* Undertaking; yea, and readily acknowledge, that it very far exceeds *our* poor Poſſibility *ſingly* and *nakedly* conſidered. So that if we were left to *ſtruggle* with the Difficulty of it in our own ſingle Strength, we might juſtly *deſpair* of Succeſs, and ſo tamely *lie down* and *yield* our ſelves *foil'd* and *defeated.* But God be praiſed this is not our Caſe; for though when we caſt our eyes upon the many *violent* Inclinations to evil that are *within* us, and upon the *numberleſs* Temptations to evil that are *about* us; when we ſeriouſly reflect upon the *Weakneſs* of our Reaſon, and the *Strength* of our *Luſt*, and the *Number* and *Nearneſs* and *Prevalency* of thoſe Objects from without that are continually *preſſing upon* and *aſſaulting* our good Reſolutions; though, I ſay, when we reflect upon all this, we are ready to cry out as *Eliſha*'s Servant did when he beheld the City compaſſed with Horſes and with Chariots, *Alas, Maſter, how ſhall we do?* How ſhall we be able to withſtand all this mighty Army of Enemies? yet if we turn our Eyes from our *own* Weakneſs, and our *Enemies* Strength, to thoſe gracious Promiſes of *Aſſiſtance* which the Father of Mercies hath made to us, we ſhall quickly be able to anſwer *our ſelves*, as *Eliſha* did *him*, *Fear not*, O my Soul, *for they that are with us are more*, and more powerful, *than they that are againſt us.* For we have with us not only the *outward* Arguments of Religion, which are of infinite *more* Force than any *outward* Inducement to Vice whatſoever; we have with us not only the holy *Angels* of God, who are as *willing*, and more *able* to *direct* and *ſtrengthen* us, than all the infernal *Furies*

to

to *inſnare* and *captivate* us; but we have with us alſo the Almighty Spirit of God, who by the *Oeconomy* of Heaven, and the *Promiſe* of our Lord, is obliged to *miniſter* to us in all our Neceſſities, and to *aid* and *aſſiſt* us againſt all thoſe Difficulties which would be otherwiſe *too hard* for us, if we were left to *our ſelves*. So that if we do but hold true to our own Intereſt, and take care that we do not drive him away from us, by ſiding wilfully with our own Enemies againſt him, we *ſhall* not, no, we *cannot* miſcarry; unleſs (which is *impoſſible*) ſome ſuch Temptation ſhould befal us, as neither *we* nor *he* can reſiſt and cope with. For till by our wilful Sin we have forfeited our Title to the promiſe of his Aſſiſtance, we are as ſure of *his* Help in all things that are neceſſary, as we can be of our *own* Endeavour; and 'tis not more in our power to do what we *can* by the Strength of our own *Faculties*, than 'tis to ingage him to *inable* us to do what we *cannot* without his *Aid* and *Aſſiſtance*. For by faithfully *indeavouring* to perſevere in well-doing, we intitle our ſelves to all the neceſſary Aſſiſtances of his Grace, and ſo long as this *Title* continues, we are Maſters not only of our *own* Strength but of *his* too, and can do not only whatſoever is within our *own* Power *without* him, but alſo whatſoever is in *his* Power concurring *with ours*.

So that though our Warfare be *difficult*, it cannot be *impoſſible*, unleſs *we* will have it ſo. For to be ſure there is nothing in it that can be too hard for *Gods* Grace *co-operating* with the Powers of *our* Nature; and therefore there can be nothing in it too hard for *us*, whilſt 'tis in our Power

to *ſecure* our ſelves of *that* his gracious Co-operation.

Wherefore let us ſtand *bogling* no longer at the Difficulty of our Progreſs in Religion, ſince God be praiſed, there is nothing required of us beyond what we are *able*; do you but *your* Part which is only what you *can*, and then doubt not but God will do *his*; put forth but your *honeſt*, *Hearty* Endeavour, and earneſtly *implore* his Aid and Aſſiſtance, and if *then* you miſcarry, let Heaven anſwer for it. But if upon a Pretence that your Work is too *difficult*, and your Enemies too *mighty* for you, you lay down your Arms, and reſolve to contend with them no longer, let Heaven and Earth judge between God and you, which is to be charged with your ruine; God, that ſo graciouſly *offered* you his Help, that ſtretched out his Hand to *raiſe* ye up, tendered you his ſpirit to *guard* and *conduct* ye through all Oppoſitions to eternal Happineſs, or you, that would not be *perſuaded* to do any thing for your ſelves, but rather choſe to *periſh* with *Eaſe*, than take any *Pains* to be *ſaved*.

V. Conſider that the Practice of theſe Duties is not ſo *difficult*, but that it is fairly conſiſtent with all your other neceſſary *Occaſions*. When men are told how many Duties are neceſſary to their ſucceſsful *Progreſs* in Religion, what *Patience* and *Conſtancy*, what frequent *Examinations* and *Trials* of themſelves, what lively *Thoughts* and *Expectations* of Heaven, *&c.* they are apt to conclude, that if they ſhould ingage to do *all* this, they muſt reſolve to do nothing *elſe*, but even ſhake hands with all their *ſecular* Buſineſs and Diverſions,

Diverſions, and *Cloiſter* up themſelves from all other Affairs. Which is a very great Miſtake, proceeding either from their not *conſidering*, or not *underſtanding* the nature of theſe religious Exerciſes, the greateſt part of which are ſuch as are to be *wholly* tranſacted in the Mind, whoſe Motions and Operations are much more *nimble* and *expedite* than thoſe of the Body, and ſo may be very well *intermixt* with our ſecular Employments, without any *Lett* or *Hindrance* to them. For what great time is there required for a man now and then to revolve a few *wiſe* and *uſeful* Thoughts in his Mind, to *conſider* the Nature of an Action when it *occurs*, and *reflect* upon an Error when it's *paſt* and hath *eſcaped* him? I can conſider a Temptation when it's *approaching* me, and with a Thought or two of Heaven or Hell *arm* my Reſolution againſt it in the twinkling of an eye; I can look up to Heaven with an eye of earneſt *Expectance*, and ſend my Soul thither in a ſhort *Ejaculation* without interrupting my Buſineſs; and yet *theſe* and ſuch as theſe, do make up a great part of thoſe religious Exerciſes wherein the proper Duty of our Chriſtian Warfare conſiſts. And though to the due performance of theſe Duties, it will be ſometimes neceſſary that our Minds ſhould dwell *longer* upon them, yet it is to be conſidered that when once we are *entered* upon the Practice of them, our Mind will be much more at *Leiſure* to attend to them; for then 'twill be in a great meaſure taken off from its *wild* and *unreaſonable* Vagaries, from its *ſinful* Deſigns and *lewd* Contrivances, from its *Phantaſtick* Complacencies in the *Pleaſures* of Sin, and

anxious Reflections on the *Guilt* and Danger of it; and when all this Rubbiſh is thrown out of the Mind, there will be room enough for good Thoughts to dwell in it, without *interfering* with any of our neceſſary *Cares* and *Diverſions*. For would we but give theſe our *religious* Exerciſes *as much* Room in our Minds as we did *heretofore* freely allow to our *Sins*; they would ask no *more*, but leave us as much at *Leiſure* for our other Affairs *as ever*.

I confeſs there are ſome of theſe Duties that exact of us their *fixt* and *ſtated* Portions of Time, ſuch as our Morning *Conſideration* and *Prayer*, our Evening *Examination* and *Prayer*, our religious Obſervation of the *Lords Day*, and our *preparing* for and *receiving* the Holy Sacrament; but all this may be very well ſpared without any *Prejudice* to any of our lawful Occaſions. For what great matter of Time doth it ask for a man to think over a few good Thoughts in the Morning, and *forearm* his Mind with them againſt the Temptations of the Day; to recommend himſelf to God in a *ſhort*, *pithy*, and *affectionate* Prayer, and *repeat* his Purpoſe and Reſolution of Obedience; what an eaſie matter were it for you to borrow ſo many Moments as would ſuffice for *this* Purpoſe from your *Bed*, and your *Comb* and *Looking-glaſs*? And as for the Evening, when your Buſineſs is over, it's a very hard caſe if you cannot ſpare ſo much time either from your Company or Refreſhments as to make a ſhort *Review* of the Actions of the Day; to *confeſs* and beg *Pardon* for the *Evils* you have faln into, or to *bleſs* God for the *Good* you have *done*, and the *Evils* you have *avoided*; and then

then to recommend your ſelves to his Grace and Protection for the future. And as for your religious Obſervation of the *Lords Day*, it is only the *ſeventh* Part of your Time; and can you think much to devote *that*, or at leaſt the *greateſt* Part of that, to him who gives you your *Being* and *Duration?* And laſtly, as for your receiving the *Lords Supper*, 'tis at moſt but *once* a Month that you are *invited* to it, and 'tis a hard Caſe, if out of ſo great a proportion of Time you cannot afford a *few* Hours to *examine* your *Defects*, and to *quicken* your *Graces*, and to *dreſs* and *prepare* your ſelves for that bleſſed Commemoration. Alas! how *eaſie* were all this to a *willing* Mind? And if we had but *half* that Concern for our Souls and everlaſting Intereſt that we have for our Bodies, we ſhould count ſuch things as theſe not *worth* our mentioning. How *diſingenuous* therefore is it for men to make ſuch *tragical* Out-cries as they do of the *Hardſhip* and *Difficulty* of this ſpiritual Warfare, when there is nothing at all in it that *intrenches* either on their *ſecular* Callings, or *neceſſary* Diverſions; when they may be going *onward* to Heaven while they are doing their *Buſineſs*, and *mortifying* their Luſts even in the Enjoyment of their *Recreations*, and ſo take their Pleaſure both *here* and *hereafter?*

VI. Conſider that the Difficulty of theſe Duties is ſuch, as will certainly *abate* and *wear off*, by Degrees, if we *conſtantly* practiſe them. For in all Undertakings whatſoever, it is *Uſe* that makes *Perfectneſs*, and that which is exceeding *hard* to us at *firſt*, either through want of *Skill* to manage, or *Inclination* to practiſe it, will by

degrees grow *eaſier* and *eaſier*, as we are more and more *accuſtomed* and *familiarized* to it. And this we ſhall find by Experience, if we conſtantly exerciſe our ſelves in theſe *progreſſive* Duties of our Religion, which to a Mind that hath *been* altogether *unacquainted* with them, will at *firſt* be very difficult. 'Twill go againſt the grain of a *wild* and *ungoverned* Nature, to be confined from its *extravagant* Ranges by the *ſtrict* ties of a religious *Diſcipline*; and to reduce a *roving* Mind to ſevere Conſideration, or a *fickle* one to Conſtancy and Reſolution, or an *unreflecting* one to Self-examination; to raiſe up an *earthly* Mind to *heavenly* Thoughts and Expectations; and confine a *liſtleſs* and *regardleſs* one to ſtrict Watchfulneſs and Circumſpection; to confine a *carnal* mind to *frequent* Sacraments; or an *indevout* & careleſs one to its *daily* and *weekly* periods of Devotion, will at the firſt no doubt be very *painful* and *tedious*; but after we have *perſiſted* in, and for a while *accuſtomed* our ſelves to it, we ſhall find it will quickly grow more *natural* and *eaſie* to us, and from being *grievous* it will become *tolerable*, from being tolerable *eaſie*, and from being eaſie *delightful*. For when once we come to feel the good Effects of thoſe Duties in our Natures, how faſt our Luſts do *decline*, our Diſpoſitions *mend*, and all our Graces *improve* in the Uſe of them, the Senſe of this will mightily *indear* and *ingratiate* them to us. Juſt as it is with a *Scholar*, when he firſt *enters* upon the Methods of *Learning*, they are very *tedious* and *irkſom* to him; the pains of *reading*, *obſerving*, and *recollecting*, the *Confinement* to a Study, and the *racking* his Brains with ſevere *Reaſoning* and *Diſcourſe*, are

are things that he cannot eaſily away with, till he hath been *inured* and *accuſtomed* to them a while, and then they grow more *natural* and *eaſie* to him; but when he comes to be ſenſible of the great *Advantages* he reaps by his Labour, how it *raiſes* and *improves* his Underſtanding, *inlarges* its proſpect, and *furniſhes* its Conception with *brave* and *uſeful* Notions; then do his Labours which were formerly ſo *grievous*, become not only *eaſie*, but *delectable* to him. And even ſo it is with theſe *ſpiritual* Exerciſes of Religion, which to *unexperienced* perſons that are yet but newly entered upon them will be very *painful* and *troubleſom*; but if they have but *Patience* and *Courage* to hold on, Cuſtom will quickly render them more *tolerable*, and when they have practiſed them ſo long as to find and perceive the bleſſed Effects of them, how much they have contributed to the *reforming* their Tempers, *reducing* their Inclinations, *filing* and *poliſhing* their rough and miſ-ſhapen Natures; with what *amiable* Graces, *divine* and *godlike* Diſpoſitions they have *adorned* and *beautified* them; their Senſe and Feeling of *this* will convert them all into *delightful* Recreations. Thus as the Cuſtom of them will render them *eaſie*, ſo the bleſſed Fruits of them will make them *delectable*; the former will render them *facil* as Nature, the latter *eligible* as Reward. And if ſo, why ſhould we be diſcouraged, faint-hearted Creatures that we are, at thoſe little *preſent* Difficulties, which our Diligence will ſoon *wear off* and convert into *Eaſe* and *Pleaſure*?

VII. Conſider that with the *Difficulty* of them, there is a world of preſent *Peace* and

Satisfaction intermingled. If you *fall back* again to your old Luſts, inſtead of theſe *preſent* Difficulties you *ſtart* at, you muſt expect to have the *Trouble* of a guilty Soul to contend with; which, if you have any ſenſe of God, and of Good and Evil, will be much more *grievous* to you than they. But if you *go on*, you will carry with you a *quiet* and a *ſatisfied* Mind, a Conſcience that will entertain you all along with ſuch *ſweet* and *calm* Reflections as will abundantly *compenſate* you for all the Hardſhips and Difficulties you encounter on the way; that with innumerable Iterations will be always *reſounding* to your *honeſt* Endeavours thoſe *beſt* and *ſweeteſt* Echoes, *Well done good and profitable ſervant*, how *bravely* haſt thou acquitted thy ſelf, how *manfully* haſt thou ſtood to thy Duty againſt all Oppoſitions, and with what a *Gallant* Reſolution haſt thou *repulſed* thoſe Temptations that bore up againſt thee? Now for a man to have his own Mind continually *applauding* him, and *crowning* his Actions with the Approbations of his Conſcience, is Encouragement enough to *balance* a thouſand Difficulties; and the Senſe that he hath done his Duty, and that the God *above*, and the Vice-god *within* him, are both *ſatisfied* and *pleaſed* with him, will give him ſuch a *grateful* Reliſh of each Action of his Warfare, that the *Difficulty* will only ſerve to inhance the *Pleaſure* of it.

And as he will have great *Peace* and *Satisfaction* whilſt he is *contending* with theſe Difficulties, ſo when he hath ſo far *conquered* them as that they are no longer able to *curb* and *with-hold* him from the *free* and *vigorous* Exerciſe of the heavenly Vertues,

Vertues, but in deſpight of them he can eaſily *moderate* his Paſſions and Appetites by the Laws of his Reaſon, and freely *love*, *adore*, and *imitate*, *ſubmit* to, and *confide* in the ever-bleſſed God, and chearfully exert an unforced *Plainneſs* and *Simplicity*, *Good-will* and *Charity*, *Submiſſion* and *Condeſcenſion*, *Peace* and *Concord* towards all men; when, I ſay, he hath ſo far *ſurmounted* the Difficulties of his Warfare, as that with any Meaſure of Freedom and Vigour he can put forth all theſe heavenly Vertues, he will find himſelf not only in a *quiet*, but in a *heavenly* Condition. For theſe heavenly Graces are the *Palate* by which the immortal Mind *taſtes* and *reliſhes* its Heaven, the bleſſed *Organs* and *Senſories* by which it *feels* and *perceives* the Joys of the World to come, and without which it can no more *reliſh* and *injoy* them, than the ſenſeleſs Hive can the ſweetneſs of the Honey that is in it. And conſequently the more *quick* and *vivacious* theſe heavenly Organs of the Mind are, and the more they are diſburthened of thoſe *carnal* and *deviliſh* Luſts that *blunt* their Senſe and Perception, the more *accurately* they will *taſte* the Joys and Pleaſures of Heaven. So that when by the conſtant Practice of the *warfaring* Duties of Religion, we have *conquered* thoſe bad Inclinations of our Natures, which render the heavenly Vertues ſo *difficult* to us, and do ſo *clog* and *incumber* us in the Exerciſe of them, we ſhall find our ſelves in a *Heaven* upon *Earth*, and each Act of Vertue will be a *Preſention* and *Foretaſte* of the Joys of the celeſtial Life. And being arrived at this bleſſed State in which all heavenly Vertue is ſo *connaturalized* to us, the ſweet Experi-

Experience we ſhall have of the *unſpeakable* Joys and Pleaſures it abounds with, will cauſe us to look back with wondrous *Content* and *Satisfaction* upon all thoſe Difficulties we *contended* with in our Way to it, and bleſs thoſe *Prayers* and *Tears*, and *Strivings* with our ſelves, thoſe tedious *Watchings* and *Self-examinations*, &c. by which we have now at laſt *conquered* and *ſubdued* them.

Wherefore ſince the Practice of theſe our *warfaring* Duties hath ſo much *preſent* Peace going along with it, and ſince by its natural Drift and Tendency it's leading us *forward* to a State of ſo much *Pleaſure* and *Satisfaction*, what a Madneſs is it, for a man to be beaten off from it, by thoſe preſent *little* Difficulties that attend it! What man that conſults his own Intereſt would ever deſiſt from the proſecuting ſuch a *gainful* Warfare, in which to make him amends for the preſent pains it puts him to, he is not only poſſeſt of *Peace* of Conſcience for the *preſent*, but aſſured of a happy Life for the *future*, when he hath *conquered* the Difficulties he *contends* with.

VIII. Conſider that the *Difficulty* of theſe Duties is abundantly *compenſated* by the *Reward* of them. A generous Mind will think no *Means* too hard which tend to noble and worthy *Ends*; in the proſecution of which, *Oppoſition* only whets its *Courage* and *Reſolution*. So that doubtleſs had we any Spark of Generoſity in us, the Vaſtneſs and Excellency of the *End* we purſue, would make us deſpiſe all Difficulties in the *Way* to it. What a *Meanneſs* of *Spirit* therefore doth it argue in

in us to ſtand *bogling*, as we do, at the Difficulties of Religion; to think much of ſpending a few *Days* or *Years* in this World in *ſtriving* and *contending* with our Inclinations, in *Conſideration* and *Watchfulneſs*, in earneſt *Prayer* and ſevere *Reflections* on our ſelves, when we are aſſured before-hand that at the *Concluſion* of this ſhort *Conflict* we ſhall be carried off by Angels in Triumph to Heaven, and there receive from the Captain of our Salvation a Crown of everlaſting Joys and Pleaſures; when after a few *Moments* Pains and Labour, we ſhall live *Millions* of *Millions* of moſt happy Ages in the raviſhing Fruition of a boundleſs Good, and after theſe are expired have as many Millions of Millions more to live. What an unconſcionable thing is it for us to complain of any *Difficulty*, who have ſuch a vaſt Recompence of Reward in our *View*? In the name of God, Sirs, what would you have? Why we would have Heaven drop down into our Mouths, and not put us to all this Trouble of *reaching* and *climbing* after it. Would you ſo? 'tis a very *modeſt* Deſire indeed; that is, you would have the God of Heaven *thruſt* his Favours upon you while you *ſcorn* and *deſpiſe* them, and proſtitute his Heaven to a company of *Drones* that don't think it worth their while to go out of their Hives to gather it. O! for ſhame look once more upon *Heaven*, and conſider again what it is to dwell in the Paradiſe of the World with God and Angels and Saints, and in their bleſſed Company to live out an Eternity in the moſt rapturous *Contemplations* and *Loves* and *Joys*; to *bath* our dilated Faculties in an overflowing *River* of Pleaſures, and

and in perfect *Eaſe*, *Health* and *Vigour* of Mind to feed upon a Happineſs that is as *large* as our Capacities, and as *laſting* as our Beings. Is this a Reward of that *inconſiderable* nature, that we ſhould think much to *labour* and *contend* for it; is not the Hope of being *ſatisfied for ever*, a ſufficient Encouragement to induce us to *deny* our Luſts and Appetites a *few Moments*, or is there not good enough in an everlaſting *Reſt*, to countervail a few Days and Years *Labour* and *Contention?* What though you *pant* and *labour* now while you are *climbing* the everlaſting Hills, God be praiſed 'tis not ſo far to the Top but that the pleaſant *Gales* and glorious *Proſpects* you ſhall everlaſtingly enjoy there, will ſo abundantly *compenſate* for the Difficulty of the *Aſcent*, as that inſtead of *complaining* of it you will to eternal Ages reflect upon it with *Pleaſure* and *delight*. Wherefore when your Courage begins to *ſhrink* at the Difficulty of your Warfare, do but lift up your Eyes to the Recompence of *Reward*, and to be ſure, if you have any Heart, that will inſpire you with ſuch a brave Reſolution, as nothing will be too *hard* for but what is abſolutely *impoſſible*. For how can we be *diſheartened* at any *ſuperable* Difficulty, ſo long as we are *animated* with this perſuaſion, that if we have our *Fruit unto holineſs*, *our end ſhall be everlaſting Life?*

SECT.

SECT. V.

Concerning thoſe Duties which appertain to the Perfection *and* Conſummation *of our* Chriſtian Warfare, *ſhewing* what *they are, and* how *effectually they conduce to the* perfecting *us in the Virtues of the* Heavenly Life.

I proceed now to the Third and laſt Part of our Chriſtian Warfare, *viz.* the *Conſummation* of it, which is *final Perſeverance.* For after we have *actually* ingaged, and made ſome *Progreſs* in it, our next Care and Duty is that we do not *relapſe* and baſely *retreat* from what we have ſo *proſperouſly* undertaken, and hitherto ſo *effectually* proſecuted, but that ſo long as we live we *perſiſt* in an open *Defiance* to our Sins, and Endeavour to *purſue* and *mortifie* our Inclinations to them, and *Perſevere* in the Practice of all Vertue; ſtill indeavouring thereby to *improve* and *grow on* to Perfection, that ſo we may *die* as we have hitherto *lived,* and *conſummate* our Warfare in a *final* Victory, and that when our Lord ſhall come or ſend his Herald, Death, to ſummon us off from the *Field,* we may be found *fighting* under his Banner againſt Sin, the World, and the Devil, and finally *die* as we have *lived,* his faithful *Soldiers* and *Followers.* For this he indiſpenſably exacts of us, *viz. that we ſhould be faithful unto Death,* Rev. ii. 10. *that we ſhould patiently continue in well-doing,* Rom. ii. 7. *that we ſhould indure to the end,* Matt. x. 22. *and hold the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt to the end,* Heb. iii. 14. *that we ſhould*

ſhould keep his works to the end, and finally *overcome* as well as fight, *Rev.* ii. 26. In a word, *that having ſet our hands to the plough, we ſhould not look back*, Luke ix. 62. but that *we ſhould be always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. the ſenſe of all which is, that we ſhould not only *begin* this our Chriſtian Warfare, and *proſecute* it for *a while*, but that we ſhould *proceed* and *perſevere* in it as long as we breath, and never lay down our *Arms* till we lay down our *Lives*. In order to which, as we muſt ſtill *perſevere* in the Practice of thoſe Duties which appertain to the *Courſe* and *Progreſs* of our Warfare, ſo there are ſundry other Duties which we muſt practiſe, and which have a more *direct* and *Immediate* Influence upon the final *Succeſs* and *Conſummation* of it. All which I ſhall reduce to theſe following Particulars:

1. That while we *ſtand*, we ſhould not be over-*confident* of our ſelves, but ſtill keep a *jealous* eye upon the *Weakneſs* and *Inconſtancy* of our own Natures.

2. That if at any time we wilfully *fall* and *miſcarry*, we ſhould immediately *ariſe* again by Repentance.

3. That to *prevent* the like Falls and Miſcarriages for the *future*, we ſhould indeavour to *withdraw* our Affections from the Temptations of the World, but more eſpecially from *thoſe* which were the *Occaſions* of our Fall.

4. That we ſhould more *curiouſly* ſearch into the *ſmaller* Defects and Indecencies of our Nature, in order to our *reforming* and *correcting* them.

5. That,

5. That, ſo far as *lawfully* we can, we ſhould live in a cloſe *Communion* with the *Church* whereof we are Members.

6. That we ſhould not out of a *fond* Opinion that we are good *enough* already, *ſtint* our progreſs in Religion to any determinate *Degree* or *Meaſure* of Goodneſs.

7. That we ſhould *frequently* entertain our ſelves with the proſpect of our *Mortality*, and endeavour to *compoſe* our ſelves before-hand into a good *Poſture* of *dying*.

8. That in order thereunto, we ſhould be wondrous *careful* to *diſcharge* our Conſciences of all the *Reliques* and *Remains* of our paſt *Guilt*.

9. That to *compenſate* for theſe, ſo far as we are able, we ſhould take care to *Redeem* the Time we have formerly ſpent in *ſinful* Courſes, by being *doubly* diligent in the Exerciſe of all the contrary *Virtues*, and the doing all the contrary *Good* we are able.

10. That we ſhould labour after a *Rational* and *well-grounded Aſſurance* of Heaven.

I. To the *Perfection* and *Conſummation* of our Chriſtian Warfare it is neceſſary that while we *ſtand* we ſhould not be over-*confident* of our ſelves, but ſtill keep a *jealous* Eye upon the *Weakneſs* and *Inconſtancy* of our own Natures. For thus the Apoſtle declares it to be the Will of God, that *we ſhould not truſt in our ſelves*, i. e. *rely* too much upon our own *Strength* and *Ability*, 2 Cor. i. 9. and elſewhere he admoniſhes, *let him that thinks he ſtands* (or, the *preſent* being put for the *future*, as it is very frequently, *let him that thinks he ſhall ſtand*) *take heed leſt he fall*, 1 Cor. x. 12. ſo alſo, Rom. xi.

Rom. xi. 20. *Thou ſtandeſt by faith, be not high-minded, but fear, i. e.* it is thy *Faith* that *upholds* thee, but be not too *ſecure* of thy *Support*, leſt thou alſo *fall* and *periſh*, as thy Brethren the Jews have done before thee. And hence we are bid *to work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. *i. e.* with a holy *Solicitude* and *Jealouſie*, leſt one time or other we ſhould be *tempted* and *overcome*, and at the laſt finally *miſcarry*. And indeed there is nothing doth more expoſe men to the hazard of *falling* than too much *Confidence* in their own *Strength*. This makes them venture upon a thouſand *Temptations* which they might have *fairly*, and much more *prudently* avoided; and hurries them hand over head into ſuch inviting *Occaſions* and *Opportunities* of ſinning, as do too often *inveagle* and *betray* them in deſpight of all their good Reſolutions to the contrary. Whereas had they but *ſuſpected* themſelves, and not *preſumed* too much upon their own Stedfaſtneſs, they would many a time have kept out of *harms-way*, and *avoided* the Snares that did *intangle* them; but by venturing, like *Sampſon*, to lay down their Heads in a *Dalilahs* Lap, in *Confidence* of the Strength of their own Reſolution, they have been inſenſibly *inticed*, after ſome *coy* Refuſals, to *betray* themſelves into the Snare of the Devil.

And as through an over-weening *Confidence* of our own Strength we *expoſe* our ſelves to many needleſs Temptations, ſo we do alſo too often provoke God to *withdraw* his Grace and Aſſiſtance from us, and to leave us to contend *alone* with thoſe Temptations whereunto we do ſo

confident-

confidently expoſe our ſelves. For as he is always ready to *aſſiſt* us, ſo he always expects that we ſhould acknowledge our *Need* of, and *Dependence* upon him, and not preſume too much upon our *own* Strength, which without his gracious *Concurrence*, is *Weakneſs* and *Impotence*. When therefore without Gods *Call* and *Warrant* we will needs *ruſh* into Temptations in Confidence of our own *Ability* to reſiſt and conquer them, he many times leaves us without his *Aid* and *Aſſiſtance*, that ſo he may chaſtiſe our *Preſumption* by permitting us to be *defeated*, and convince us by the woful Experiment of our *Fall*, how *unable* we are to ſtand without his Aid and Support. It is our daily Prayer that God would *not lead us into Temptation*; but if for our Trial he thinks meet to do ſo, we have all Aſſurance that if we be not wanting to our ſelves, *he will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it*, 1 Cor. x. 13. But if we will lead *our ſelves* into Temptation, in Confidence of our own Ability to *contend* with, and *break* through it, God is ſo far from being obliged to *ſecond* us in our *Folly* and unwarrantable *Raſhneſs*, that he is juſtly *provoked* by it to *abandon* us to our ſelves, and, as a certain Conſequence of that, to permit us to be *vanquiſht* and *led captive*. Wherefore as we hope to perſevere to the *End*, and to bring our Warfare to a happy *Concluſion*, it is highly neceſſary that we ſhould always keep a *jealous* Eye upon our ſelves, and not *confide* too much in our own Strength and Ability.

II. To our *final* Perſeverance in the Chriſtian Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that if at any time we wilfully *fall* and *miſcarry* in it, we ſhould *immediately ariſe* again by Repentance. For what is forbidden us as to *one* ſin, equally extends to *all*, *let not the Sun go down upon your wrath*, Eph.iv.26. that is, if you have *wilfully* given the Reins to your Wrath, ſuffer it not to break forth into *contumelious* Behaviour, but repent of it *immediately*, before the Sun ſets; according to that old Practice of the *Pythagoreans*, mentioned by *Plutarch*, who when at any time they fell into *reproachful* Language out of Anger, Τὰς δεξίας ἐμβάλλοντες ἀλλήλοις, καὶ ἀσπαζόμενοι πρὶν ἢ τὸν ἥλιον δῦναι διαλύονλο· *i. e.* before ever the Sun ſet they always took care to be *reconciled*, and conſtantly *ſhook hands* with and *embraced* one another; and the reaſon of the Prohibition, which you have in the next verſe, *viz. neither give place to the Devil*, that is, by ſuffering your *Wrath* to grow into inveterate *Malice*, equally extends to all *other* Sins, which if they be not *immediately* rooted out by repentance, will quickly *improve* into Habits. So that we have as much reaſon to repent of our *Luſt* before the Sun *riſes* on it, and of our *Fraud* and *Oppreſſion* before it hath *run its courſe* on it, as of our *Wrath* before it *goes down* upon it. And conſequently, by a parity of Reaſon, the Prohibition muſt extend to all *other* Sins as well as *this*, and oblige us, when ever we have *wilfully* ſin'd in any Particular, to *revoke* and *expiate* it by an *immediate* Act of Repentance.

For he that hath *ſin'd* wilfully and not *repented* of it, doth all the while continue an obſtinate *Rebel*

Rebel againſt God, and is ſo far from *perſevering* in the *Chriſtian* Warfare, that he is actually liſted a *Voluntier* in the *adverſe* Party. And if after we have *thus* ſin'd, Death ſhould *interpoſe* between us and our Repentance, (as who knows but it may if we repent not *immediately*) we ſhall be ſo far from *conſummating* our Chriſtian Warfare in *Victory*, that we ſhall die *Vaſſals* to the Devil. But then as by ſinning *wilfully* we do *deſert* God, ſo by continuing *impenitent* under it we ſtill run *farther* and *farther* from him, and thereby make ſo *wide* a Gap and Interruption in our religious Progreſs, as will not be eaſily *repaired* again; and whereas had we *repented* and *come back* without *Delay* as ſoon as we had *ſtrayed* from our Duty, we might have ſoon *recovered* the Ground we had loſt by it, and by a little more Diligence have gotten as far *onward* as if we had never interrupted our Progreſs at all; by *deferring* our Repentance we ſet our ſelves farther and farther *back*, and ſhall every day be more and more *indiſpoſed* to return. For in the Courſe of our Religion there is no *ſtanding ſtill*, but either we are *progreſſive* or *retrograde*, going *backward* or *forward* as long as we live; ſo that when once we are *out* of our Way, we are ſtill going *farther* out, till ſuch time as we *return* again; and conſequently the *longer* we are out, the *harder* 'twill be to return, and the *farther* we ſhall have to the end of our Way. For when I *firſt* ſin, and the Wound of my Innocence is yet *green* and *freſh*, it may eaſily be cured by the timely Application of a ſorrowful *Confeſſion* and new *Reſolution* of Amendment; but if I neglect it, 'twill *rot* and *putrefie*; my *Senſe* of it will be

hardned, and my *Inclination* to it grow every day more *inveterate*, and then if it be not *lanc'd* and *corroded* by a *sharp*, a *long*, and a *painful* Repentance, it will turn into an incurable *Gangrene*. Hence the Apostle bids us *exhort one another daily, while it is called to day*, that is, to *repent* while it is called to day, *lest any of us be hardned through the deceitfulness of sin*, Heb. iii. 13. So that when we have *wilfully* sin'd, we run a mighty Hazard of our *final* perseverance, if we don't repent *immediately*. For all the while we *delay*, our Conscience grows more *feared*, and our Lust grows more *confirmed*, and God knows where it will end, but 'tis fearfully to be *suspected* that *that* neglected Bruise which we got by our Fall will grow *worse* and *worse*, and *determine* at last in final *Impenitency*. Wherefore as we intend to *persevere* in well-doing, it concerns us in the *first* place to take all possible Care not to give way to any *wilful* sin, nor suffer our selves by any Hopes or Fears to be tempted from our good *Resolution*; but if at any time our wicked Inclinations should prevail against it, to betake our selves *immediately* to a serious Repentance, to make a sorrowful *Confession* of it to our offended God, and solemnly renew our *Resolution* against it, that so we may stop the growing evil *betime*, before it's capable of indangering our *final* Apostasie.

III. To our final *perseverance*, it's necessary that to *prevent* the like Falls and Miscarriages for the *future*, we should indeavour to *withdraw* our Affections from the Temptations of the World, but more especially from *those* Temptations which were the *Occasions* of our Fall. For thus we are strictly

ſtrictly prohibited *to ſet our affections upon things on the earth*, Col. iii. 21. *to love the World, and the things that are in the World*, 1 John ii. 15. *to lay up for our ſelves treaſures upon earth*, Matt. vi. 19. and it is the proper Character of a true Chriſtian *to be crucified to the World*, Gal. iv. 14. and to converſe *as a Stranger and a Pilgrim in it*, Heb. xi. 13. As on the contrary, *to mind earthly things, and to be lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God*, are made the proper Characters of Infidels and Apoſtates, *Phil.* iii. 19. compared with 2 *Tim.* ii. 4. And ſo inconſiſtent is an inordinate Affection to the World with our *perſeverance* in the Chriſtian Warfare, that S. *James* expreſly tells us, *that the friendſhip of the World is enmity with God*, Jam. iv. 4. and 'tis to the Exceſs of our friendſhip to it that the Scripture frequently attributes our Apoſtaſie, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10. and the Apoſtle tells us, *that they that will be rich*, that is, immoderately covet to be ſo, *fall into temptation and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in perdition and deſtruction*; *and that the love of money is the root of all evil*, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. From all which it's apparent, how neceſſary it is, in the accounts of Chriſtianity, in order to our *perſeverance*, that we ſhould indeavour to *wean* and *abſtract* our ſelves from the World.

For this World is the *Magazine* of all thoſe Temptations by which our Vertue and Innocence is *importuned* and *aſſaulted*; and 'tis either the *Hope* of ſome worldly *Pleaſure*, *Profit* or *Honour* that *allures*, or the *Fear* of ſome of the contrary Evils which are incident to us in the Courſe of Religion that *affrights* us from our Duty. Whilſt

therefore we *immoderately* love thoſe Goods and Evils which are the *Solicitours* of Vice, we are in very great danger of being *conquered* and *led captive* by it. For 'tis not for the ſake of *ſinning* that men ſin, but for the ſake of thoſe *Goods*, or to avoid thoſe *Evils* which are appendent to their *ſinning* or *not ſinning*; and conſequently, the more a man *loves* thoſe *Goods* which cling and adhere to a ſinful action, the more propenſe he will be to the Commiſſion of it; and the more he *dreads* thoſe *Evils* which he can moſt eaſily avoid by a ſinful Action, the more prone and inclinable he will be to it. Wherefore to ſecure our *perſeverance* in this Warfare againſt ſin, it is abſolutely neceſſary that we *rectifie* our *Opinion* of the Goods and Evils of this World, and *moderate* and *abate* our *Affection* towards them, eſpecially towards *thoſe* that have been moſt *prevalent* with us. For the Temptation that prevails upon us *diſcovers* the *weak* ſide of our Nature, and *inſtructs* the Devil what Good or Evil it is that is moſt apt to *allure* or *affright* us; and to be ſure that *ſubtil* Tempter, who hath been ſo many thouſand Years *ſtudying* the Arts of *ſeducing* us, will not fail to aſſault us *again* where he hath been already *ſucceſsful*; and therefore it concerns us to *fortifie* our ſelves there, where we have ſo much reaſon to expect the Enemy will *aſſault* us, and to *rectifie* our *Opinions* of, and *mortifie* our Affections to thoſe things which have already ſo much *impoſed* upon our Virtue and Innocence. For 'tis our *Imagination* that gives *Life* and *Efficacy* to the *Charms* and *Terrours* of the World, and renders them ſo ſucceſsful againſt us; we *fancy* that to be in them which

which is not, and ſo are *affected* not ſo much with the things *themſelves*, as with the falſe *Repreſentations* we make of them.

For it's plain the goods of the World are beholden to *our ſelves* for the greateſt part of thoſe *Beauties* with which they *tempt* and *allure* us; and 'tis our *Fancy* that gives the *Paint* and *Fucus* with which they *charm* and *inamour* our Affections, and ſo for the *Evils* of the World, 'tis our own *Imagination* that *diſguiſes* them into ſuch *Bugs* and *Scare-crows*, and puts thoſe gaſtly *Vizors* on them with which they *fright* and *amaze* us. If therefore we would but take care to *rectifie* our *Opinions* of them both, and to ſtrip them out of their *imaginary* Terrors and Allurements, we ſhould thereby *diſarm* them of their main Strength, and render them much leſs able to ſeduce us for the *future*. And this methinks we might eaſily do, if we would but fairly repreſent to our ſelves the preſent *State* and *Poſture* of our Affairs. For we are a ſort of Beings, that are every Moment travelling from *hence* to an *eternal* World, where an *unexpreſſible* Happineſs or Miſery attends us; and all that we *enjoy* or *ſuffer* in this Life, is only the *Convenience* or *Inconvenience* of a *ſhort* Journey to a *long* Home, but can have no other Influence upon our *everlaſting* Condition, than as it is the Occaſion either of our *Virtue* or *Vice*, which are the only *Goods* and *Evils* that will accompany us to Eternity, and make us *happy* or *miſerable* there for ever. But as for *Poverty* or *Riches*, *Pain* or *Pleaſure*, *Diſgrace* or *Reputation*, they are things which probably within theſe ten or twenty Years will be as perfectly *indifferent* to us as our laſt Nights *Dream*

was when we awoke in the Morning. And this, methinks, duly *conſidered*, were enough to render us very *unconcerned* at any *Good* or *Evil* that can happen to us here. For what a mighty Matter is it whether I fare *well* or *ill* for twenty or thirty Years, who when that is expired muſt be *happy* or *miſerable* for Millions of Millions of Ages; and what will theſe *little* Goods or Evils ſignifie to me, when my *Body* is in the Grave, and my *Soul* in Eternity? When I am *ſtript* into a naked Spirit, and ſet *aſhore* upon the inviſible world, then all theſe things will *be* as if they never *were*, and in the twinkling of an Eye I ſhall *loſe* Sight of them for ever; and of all that *I enjoyed* or *ſuffered* in this Life I ſhall have nothing remaining but my *Virtue* or *Vice*, whoſe Iſſues will prove my eternal *Happineſs* or *Miſery*. Doubtleſs, would we but accuſtom our Minds to ſuch Reflections as theſe, they would effectually *reſtrain* us from the immoderate *Love* or *Fear* of the things of this world, and reduce us to a *conſtant* and *efficacious* Perſuaſion, that there is no *Good* in this world *comparable* to that of doing our *Duty*, nor any *Evil* incident to us in this Life, that is not infinitely leſs *formidable* than *Sin*. And when once our *Affection* to this world, and our *Opinion* of the Goods and Evils of it, are thus *moderated* and *rectified*, the Temptations to Sin will quite *loſe* their *hold* of us, and be no more able to *faſten* upon our Reſolution. So that now we may paſs ſafely through them whilſt they are *ſparkling* about us, there being no *Tinder* in our Breaſts for them to *catch fire* and *kindle* upon. Now they will be no longer capable to *allure* or *affright* us, thoſe boſom

Orators

Orators being *ſilenced* that were wont to *contend* for them, and to *magnifie* their *Charms* and *Terrors*; and when we neither immoderately *love* nor *fear* them, 'twill be no hard matter to *defend* our Virtue and Innocence againſt all their *Aſſaults* and *Importunities*.

IV. To our *final* Perſeverance, it is neceſſary that we ſhould more *curiouſly* ſearch into the *ſmaller* Defects and Indecencies of our Nature in order to our *reforming* and *correcting* them. Hence we are commanded *to hate even the garments ſpotted by the fleſh*, Jude 23. *i. e.* to take care of the *Beginnings* of Sin, of any thing that hath the leaſt *Spot* or *Infection* of it, and accordingly we are obliged not only to take care to *rub out* the greater *Stains* of our Nature, but *to be diligent that we may be found of our Lord in peace without ſpot and blameleſs*, 2 Pet. iii. 14. *i. e.* to endeavour to reform thoſe *ſmaller* and more *indiſcernable* Defects of our Nature, which though they do not totally *ſtain*, yet very much *ſpot* and *blemiſh* it; that ſo at the coming of our Lord we may be found not only *ſincere* and *upright*, but, as near as may be, *innocent* and *blameleſs*. For ſo, *Phil.* ii. 15. we are bid to be *blameleſs, harmleſs, and without rebuke in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation*, *i. e.* to endeavour ſo to demean our ſelves in this World, as that we may appear not only honeſt *for the main*, but, ſo near as is poſſible, *ſpotleſs* and *unreproveable*. And indeed there is nothing doth more frequently occaſion mens *final* Miſcarriage in Religion, than their not being *careful* and *diligent* in this matter. When they firſt enter into the Chriſtian Warfare, they very induſtriouſly ſet them-

themſelves againſt that Courſe of wilful Sin in which they formerly lived, and this were wondrous well, if they did not *ſtop* here, and go no *farther*; but alas, in the mean time, while they are thus induſtriouſly buſied in ſubduing their *old* Sins, there are a great many leſſer *Flaws* and *Defects* in their Nature, which by a *timely* Care and Inſpection they might eaſily correct; but theſe they take no Notice of, but quietly permit them to *grow* and *increaſe*, till at laſt they become as *hurtful* and *dangerous* to them as their old Sins were, againſt which they have all this while ſo zealouſly contended. As for inſtance, when they firſt entered upon a Reſolution of Amendment, they were *profane* it may be, or *ſenſual*, or vehemently addicted to *Fraud* and *Oppreſſion*; and againſt theſe they oppoſed themſelves with great *Zeal* and *Animoſity*; and ſo far they did *well*, but in the mean time perhaps there was *Pride* and *Oſtentation*, *Envy* and *Peeviſhneſs*, *Self-will* and *Cenſoriouſneſs*, ſecretly *budding* and *ſprouting* up in their Natures, all which they might have eaſily cured by *timely* Applications; but alas! in the Heat of their Conteſt againſt their *other* Sins, they never ſo much as minded or regarded *theſe*, but e'en left them alone till they *grew* up into obſtinate and inveterate Habits, and became every whit as *fatal* and *deſtructive* to their Souls as *thoſe* were which they have been all this while *ſubduing* and *mortifying*. So that after all they have only *changed* their Sins, and have been *conjuring up* one Devil while they have been *laying* another; and whilſt the Tide of their Wickedneſs hath been *ebbing* on this Shore, it hath been *flowing* on the contrary, and

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as it hath *ſunk* in *Senſuality*, it hath *ſwelled* into Deviliſhneſs. Perhaps whilſt you are zealouſly carrying on your Warfare againſt your old Sins, you may find your ſelves too apt to be *tickled* with Applauſe, and *puffed* with vain Oſtentation; have a Care now, that while you are *ſtarving* one Vice, you do not *pamper* another. For if you do not correct this *little* Irregularity of your Nature *betimes*, 'twill ſoon be as *dangerous* and *miſchievous* to you, as ever any of thoſe Vices were againſt which you are contending; 'twill by degrees ſo *inſinuate* into your good Intentions, and ſo *ſophiſticate* the Purity of them, that at laſt you will *intend* nothing elſe but *Applauſe*; and ſo your whole Religion will be converted into dead *Shew* and empty *Pageantry*, and your ſpiritual Warfare will prove only a paſſage out of *Profaneneſs* into *Hypocriſie*. It may be whilſt you are contending againſt thoſe *fleſhly* Inclinations by which you have formerly been captivated, your Hearts will begin to *ſwell* with an *over-weening* Conceit of your own Vertue and Godlineſs, and as a Conſequence of that, to entertain *contemptuous* and *cenſorious* Thoughts of your Brethren; beware now, that whilſt you are *ſtrugling* with your old fleſhly Luſts, you do not *overlook* theſe little *Defects* and *Indecencies* of your Nature; leſt while you are conquering *one* ſort of ſins, you be captivated by *another*. For if you do not take care to *nip* them in their *Buds*, and to *check* theſe little *Eſſays* and *Beginnings* of them, they will ſoon *ſpring up* into Habits of *Pride* and *Inſolence*, *Rancour* and *Uncharitableneſs*, and ſo your Warfare againſt Sin will be only a *Tranſition* from *one* Evil into *another*, from

from the Pollutions of the *Fleſh* into the Pollutions of the *Spirit*, and from the Nature of *Beaſts* into the Nature of *Devils*. Wherefore if you would be *finally* ſucceſsful in the Chriſtian Warfare, you muſt take great Care that while you are contending with the *groſſer* and more *inveterate* Vices of your Nature, you do not neglect its *leſſer* Defects and Irregularities; for whilſt they are *leſſer* they may be *eaſily* corrected, but if they are not, they will ſoon grow *greater*, and in the End prove as *dangerous* as thoſe you are now contending with. For every Vice is *ſmall* in the Beginning, and *eaſie* to be cured, but if it be *neglected*, like a Scratch in the Fleſh, it will *corrupt* and *rankle* into a ſpreading *Gangrene*.

V. To our *Perſeverance* to the End in this our Chriſtian Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that, ſo far as *lawfully* we can, we ſhould live in cloſe *Communion* with the *Church* whereof we are Members. 'Tis true, a particular Church may be ſo *corrupted*, as that its Members may be obliged to *diſunite* themſelves from it. For every man is obliged by Vertue of his being in *any* Society, not to agree to any thing which tends to the apparent *Ruine* of it. Now the main End of *Chriſtian* Society being the *Honour* of *God*, and the *Salvation* of *Souls*, every man that enters into it is thereby obliged in his own Station to *advance* this End; and conſequently, as to *joyn* in all Acts of the Chriſtian Society he is *united* to, ſo far as they *tend* thereunto, ſo to *refuſe* all *ſuch* Acts of that Society, if any *ſuch* ſhould be injoyned, as do apparently *oppoſe*, and are directly *repugnant* to it. So that if any Act that is apparently *ſinful*, be injoyned

by

by the particular Church whereof I am a Member, as a neceſſary Condition of my *Communion* with her, I am bound to *abſtain* from it, for the ſake of the *general* End of Chriſtian Society. As for Inſtance, ſuppoſe the *Church* whereof I am a *Member*, require it as a Condition of my Communion, that I ſhould tranſgreſs any *juſt* Law of the *Commonwealth* whereof I am a *Subject*; in this Caſe I am bound rather to *deſert* that Churches Communion, than live in wilful *Diſobedience* to the Civil Authority. And this is the Caſe of thoſe men, who though they live in a Chriſtian Commonwealth, have been *Baptized* into, and *bred up* in the Communion of *particular* Congregations that, contrary to Law, have *ſeparated* themſelves from the *Eſtabliſht*, *National* Church; for if in this *National* Church there be nothing impoſed on them by the Laws of the *Commonwealth* that is apparently contradictory to the Laws of *Chriſt*, they are bound in Conſcience to *deſert* thoſe *ſeparate* Congregations (allowing them to be *true* Churches) and to *joyn* themſelves with the Church *National*; and if they do not, they are wilful Offenders againſt the Law of Chriſt, which requires us to obey all Humane Ordinances *for the Lords ſake*. And again, ſuppoſing *one* National Church to be ſubject to *another*, that which is *ſubject* is bound to refuſe the Communion of that which is *ſuperiour*, if it cannot enjoy it without complying with Impoſitions that are apparently *ſinful*. Which is evidently the Caſe between *us* and the *Church of* Rome, ſuppoſing that *de jure* we were once her *Subjects* and *Members*; for had we been ſo, we ſhould doubtleſs never

never have *ſeparated* our ſelves from her, could we but have ſeparated her *Sins* from her Communion; could we have profeſt her *Creed* without *implicitly* believing all her Cheats and Impoſtures, or ſubmitted our ſelves to her *Guides* without apparent Danger of being *miſled* by them into the pit of Deſtruction, or joyn'd with her publick *Services* without *worſhipping* of *Creatures*, or received her *Sacraments* without practiſing the groſſeſt *Superſtitions* and *Idolatries*. But when ſhe had made it neceſſary for us either to *ſin with*, or *ſeparate from* her, we could have no other *honeſt* Remedy but only to *withdraw*; and if in this our *Separation* there had been a ſinful *Schiſm* on either ſide, we could have appealed to Heaven and Earth *whoſe* the Guilt of it was; *theirs* that forced us upon it, or *ours* that were forced to it. But yet the Caſe of *our* Separation from the *Church of* Rome, is vaſtly different from that of the Separation of *private* Members from their own *particular* Churches. For we affirm that the *Church of* Rome is but a *particular* Church, whoſe *Authority* extends no farther than to its own *native* Members, and conſequently hath no more Power to impoſe Laws of Communion upon *us*, than *we* have upon *her*; our particular Church being altogether as *diſtinct* and *independent* from *her*, as *ſhe* is from *ours*. So that though the Terms of Communion ſhe impoſes upon her own Members, were all of them *lawful* and *innocent*, yet do they no more *oblige* us as we are *Chriſtians* of the *Church of England*, than the *lawful* Commands of the *Great Mogul* do, as we are *Subjects* of the *Kingdom of* England.

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But the Case of *private* Members, whether of *ours*, or any *other* particular Church, is vastly different. For if we will allow *particular* Churches to be so many *formed Societies* of Christians; (as we must do, or else degrade them into so many *confused multitudes*) we must necessarily allow them to have a just *Authority* (even as all *other* formed Societies have) over their own Members. And that they have so, is evident not only from the Nature of the thing, but also from *Scripture*, where the *Bishops* and *Pastors* of particular Churches are said to be constituted by the Holy Ghost *Overseers* of their particular Flocks, *Acts* xx. 28. which word both in *sacred* and *prophane* Writ denotes a *ruling* Power. And accordingly these Overseers are elsewhere called *ruling-Elders*, 1 *Tim.* v. 17. and the Subjects and Members of their Churches are required *to obey them, as those that have the Rule over them*, Heb. xiii. 17. and elsewhere the Apostle exhorts them to *know*, i. e. *submissively to own* the Authority of those that were *over them in the Lord*, 1 Thes. v. 12. By all which it's evident, that the Members of *particular* Churches are by *divine institution* subjected to the *Authority* of their *spiritual Governours*, and obliged in *all things* to *obey* them, wherein they are not *countermanded* by Christ himself. So that though *one* particular Church may *refuse* the Impositions of *another*, and that not only as they are *sinful*, but as they are *Impositions*, because the other hath no *lawful Authority* over it; yet is it by no means *lawful* for the Subjects of any *particular* Church to *disobey* their Church-Governours in any *lawful* matter; because being *subjected* to their *Authority* by

by Chriſt the ſupreme Head of the *Church-Catholick*, they are obliged to ſubmit to them as to his *Subſtitutes* and *Vicegerents* in every thing which he hath not *antecedently* prohibited. And if rather than do ſo, they ſhall chuſe to *revolt* from the Communion of their Church, they are *Schiſmaticks*, or, which is the ſame thing, they are *Rebels* to Chriſts Authority in that particular Church they Revolt from. For what *Faction* is in the *State*, that is *Schiſm* in the *Church*, *viz.* an *unjuſt* Oppoſition to Authority; the one to Chriſts *Civil* Authority derived upon our *Magiſtrates*, the other to his *ſpiritual* Authority derived upon our *Biſhops* and *Eccleſiaſtical* Governours.

'Tis true in ſome Caſes, as I hinted before, *withdrawing* from the Communion of a Church may be ſo far from being a *Rebellion* againſt Chriſt, that it may be an Act of *Duty* and *Obedience* to him. For where Chriſt who is my *ſupreme* Lord, and my *Eccleſiaſtical* Governours who are in Authority *under* him, command things that are directly *inconſiſtent*, I am doubtleſs bound to obey *him* rather than *them*, yea, though their Commands are not inconſiſtent in *themſelves*, yet if I am *fully perſwaded* they are, it is all one to *me*. For when I do what I *falſly* believe Chriſt hath forbidden, I am in *Will* as much a *Rebel* againſt his Authority, as when I do what I *truly* believe he hath forbidden. And ſo by *not complying* with my ſpiritual Governours out of an *innocent miſperſwaſion* that what they command is *unlawful*, I do *formally* and in *Will* as much *obey* Chriſt in ſo *doing*, as if it were *really* unlawful. So that in ſhort, when the Governours of the Church, whereof I am a Member, do

do impose as the Conditions of my Communion, things that are either unlawful in themselves, or that, after due Examination, I verily believe are unlawful, I am bound in Obedience to the Authority of Christ, rather to *desert* that Communion, than to *comply* with the Terms and Conditions of it.

But since to *desert* the Communion of a Church is a matter of *vast* Moment, (as I shall prove by and by) it ought not to be done without the greatest *Caution* and *Tenderness*. For he that rejects *sinful Terms* of *Communion* without *just* Enquiry and *sufficient* Examination, is formally as much a *Schismatick*, *i. e.* he is as much a Rebel in *Will* to Christs spiritual Authority in his Church *Delegates* and *Vicegerents*, as he that *rashly* rejects *innocent* and *lawful ones*. For had it been only the *Sinfulness* of the Condition that displeased him, he would have made Conscience before he presumed to *reject* it, *duly* to inform himself whether it were *sinful* or *no*; but by thus rejecting it *at a venture*, without a *due* Enquiry into the nature of it, he plainly shews that 'twas not so much the *Sin* that displeased him, as the *Authority* that imposed it; and that 'twas not his *Conscience* that took offence at it, but his *Humour*; and consequently, that he would have had the same *Dislike* of it, though it had been *lawful* and *innocent*. For *Conscience* being an Act of the *Judgment* and *Reason*, cannot be offended without *Reason* either *real* or *apparent*; and without making a *due* Enquiry into the Nature of the thing we are offended at, we can have no *Reason* that will either *warrant* or *excuse* our Offence.

Now to a *due* Enquiry, it is neceſſary that we ſhould *impartially* examine *both ſides* of the Queſtion; and that while we are doing ſo, we ſhould keep *both* our Ears open to the Matter in Debate, and *equally* attend to what can be ſaid *for*, as well as to what can be ſaid *againſt* it; and then that upon a full hearing of *both*, we ſhould determine, as near as we can, on which ſide the *Truth* lies, without *Favour* or *Affection*. For he that enquires only what can be ſaid *againſt* the Matter he is offended at, doth thereby give a plain Indication that he is reſolved to be offended at it *right or wrong*; and that the End of his Enquiry is not ſo much to *ſatisfie* his *Conſcience*, as to *fortifie* his unreaſonable *Prejudice*. Wherefore before we do *reject* the Conditions of our Churches Communion as *ſinful*, we are obliged under the Penalty of *wilful Schiſm* impartially to enquire what is to be ſaid *for* as well as *againſt* them; and for this End to *apply* our ſelves to our Spiritual Governours and Paſtors, and propoſe our *Doubts* to them, and attend to their *Reſolutions* with an *honeſt*, *teachable* Mind that is willing to be informed; and where we are *capable* of judging, faithfully to peruſe thoſe *Books* and *Arguments* that make for the *one* ſide as well as the *other*. For unleſs we do thus, it's plain that we are *biaſſed* by a factious Inclination, and that we have a *great Mind* to ſeparate from the Churches Communion. For if we were not *prejudiced* againſt her Authority by a *Schiſmatical* Temper of Mind, we ſhould be as forward at leaſt to conſult what *may be* ſaid *for* her Impoſitions, as what *is* ſaid *againſt* them.

But then if the Matters ſhe impoſes are ſuch as a *plain* and *illiterate* Communicant cannot *judge of*, nor comprehend the Force of the Reaſons that make for or againſt them, ſuch perſons in ſuch Caſes are obliged humbly to *acquieſce* in the Churches Authority, and not blindly to ſeparate from her they know not why. As for Inſtance, ſuppoſe the Matter impoſed ſhould be ſuch a *Form* of Government, or ſuch *Modes* of Diſcipline, or *Rights* and *Circumſtances* of Divine Worſhip as carry no ſuch apparent Evil in them, or expreſs Contradiction to any Command of our Saviour as to inable an illiterate Chriſtian rationally to pronounce them unlawful, and whether they be unlawful or no is not to be determined perhaps without ſome Skill in the Original Languages, & the critical Acceptations of Phraſes, or inſight into Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory or Metaphyſical Niceties and Speculations; and 'tis by ſome of theſe that moſt of the Controverſies between us and our *diſſenting* Brethren are to be judged and decided. Now in ſuch Matters as theſe, where he cannot judge for himſelf, what ſhould an unlearned Communicant do? Why, this he knows well enough, that 'tis his Duty in all lawful things to ſubmit to the Governours of his Church, and reverence Chriſts Authority in them; but whether the above-named matters they impoſe be lawful or no, he neither doth nor can know. So that if upon the ſcore of thoſe Impoſitions, he rejects the Churches Communion, he rejects it he knows not why; and to avoid doing that which he doth *not* know is a Sin, he refuſes to do that which he knows is a Duty. So that whether that which the Church impoſes be lawful or no, 'tis apparent Re-

bellion in him to refuſe it; becauſe for all that he knows it is lawful, and though it ſhould be unlawful, yet that cannot be the Motive of his Non-compliance with it, who doth not underſtand the Reaſons that make it ſo. He therefore that ſeparates from the Communion of the Church for Cauſes that he cannot judge of, muſt neceſſarily ſeparate without Cauſe or Reaſon; he can have neither true nor falſe Pretence for his Separation; becauſe the Arguments *pro* and *con* are beyond the Sphere of his Cognizance; and conſequently, if he thereupon withdraw from the Churches Communion, 'tis not becauſe he cannot comply with her ſinful Impoſitions, but becauſe he will not ſubmit to her juſt Authority. Whereas by modeſtly ſubmitting our Judgment to the Churches, in Caſes where we cannot judge for our ſelves, we take an effectual Courſe to ſecure our Innocence. For though that which the Church injoyns us ſhould be materially ſinful, yet to us who neither do nor can underſtand it to be ſo, it will be imputed only as an innocent Error; becauſe by following the Churches Reaſon where our own cannot guide us, we take the beſt Courſe we can not to be miſtaken; and if we ſhould be miſtaken, we have this to excuſe us, that 'twas by following an Authority which God himſelf hath ſet over us; whereas if we are miſtaken on the other ſide, we are left altogether inexcuſable.

But then there may be other Conditions of Church Communion, of whoſe unlawfulneſs a Communicant may be very doubtful, though he be not confidently perſuaded of it; and what is to be done in this Caſe? To which I anſwer; Firſt, that

that 'tis doubtleſs our Duty not raſhly to determine any thing to be falſe or unlawful which our ſpiritual Governours have determined to be true or lawful. For we are bound by the Law of Chriſtian Modeſty, to conclude, that they having a larger Proſpect of things than we, and *greater* Advantages of enquiring into them, are far more capable Judges of what is true and lawful; and conſequently, though we may poſſibly have ſome little Probability that their Opinion is falſe, or their Command unlawful, yet we ought not to determine it ſo, unleſs it be in ſuch plain and evident Caſes as do not only out-weigh the Probability of their Opinions, but the Authority of them too. Wherefore in Caſes of a doubtful Nature, 'tis both modeſt and ſafe to ſubſcribe to the Judgment of our Superiours; becauſe in ſo doing we have not only our own Ignorance to excuſe, but their Authority to warrant us, and if we ſhould happen to be in the Wrong through our Modeſty and Humility, 'twill be ſafer for us, than to be in the Right through our Pride and Self-conceit. But perhaps the Probability of our ſide may be ſo great, or at leaſt ſeem ſo to us, that notwithſtanding we give all due Reſpect and Deference to her Authority, we cannot forbear doubting of the Lawfulneſs of her Conditions of Communion. If ſo, then, Secondly, 'tis to be conſidered that 'tis as much our Duty to Obey her Commands in things that are lawful, as not to Obey them in things that are unlawful; and therefore if we only doubt whether her Commands be lawful or no, our Doubt ought to make us as fearful of diſobeying as it doth of obeying them, becauſe the Danger of ſinning is on both

sides equal. And therefore in this Case, wherein I am necessitated to determine my self one way or t'other, it is doubtless my Duty to determine on that side which makes most for the Churches Security and Peace, which next to the Honour of God and the Salvation of Souls ought to be preferred above all things; and which consequently, if it be of any Weight with me, must necessarily turn the Scale of my Choice when it is before in *Æquilibrio*, and whether to obey or disobey be most for the Churches Peace, is very easie to be determined.

The Sum of all therefore is this, that 'tis our Duty to continue in strict Obedience to, and Communion with that Particular Church whereof we are Members, so long as it injoyns us nothing that is plainly and apparently Sinful; that if either we cannot judge of the Sinfulness or Lawfulness of her Conditions of Communion, or do only doubt of their Lawfulness, we are obliged to submit to her Judgment and Authority, and not to separate from her till upon an impartial Enquiry into the Reasons of both sides, we are fully convinced that they are Sinful.

Now that this is an indispensable Duty of our Religion, is evident not only from the above-named Scriptures by which the Bishops of particular Churches are constituted the Overseers and Governours of them, and the Subjects and Members of those Churches are required to yield them Obedience; but also from those Texts which forbid Divisions in the particular Churches, such as, 1 Cor. i. 10. *I beseech you by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that there be no divisions among you*; and

and which bid us *mark them that cauſe diviſions among us and avoid them*, Rom. xvi. 17. and alſo which Schiſms and Diviſions to be Fruits of the fleſh, as particularly, 1 *Cor.* iii. 3. and *S. Jude* 19. and in a word, which requires us *to indeavour to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace*, Epheſ. iv. 3. *to be of one mind*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. and to *ſtand faſt in one Spirit, with one* Mind, *Phil.* i. 27. all which was ſpoke to Chriſtians as they were Members of Particular Churches, to oblige them by no means to diſſent and Separate from thoſe Churches, unleſs they were forced to it by juſt and manifeſt Reaſons; and methinks 'tis a moſt pathetical Conjuration of the Apoſtle, *If there be any Conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, being of one accord, and of one mind*, Phil. ii. 1, 2. which Exhortation he gives them as they were a particular Corporation of Chriſtians under *Epaphroditus* their Head and Biſhop, by whom he ſent this Epiſtle to them. The ſence of all which is, to oblige us not to diſunite our ſelves from the Church of which we are Members, ſo long as we are permitted to continue in her Communion without doing any thing that is apparently unlawful. Or if we ſuppoſe thoſe Diviſions which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, and forbids, to be meant of Factions within the Church without actual Separation, then much more is Separation, which is the higheſt Faction and Breach of Unity to be lookt upon as wicked and unlawful. So that for men to ſeparate from the Churches Communion upon little Piques, uncertain Scruples, and blind Prejudices, is a very

great and dangerous Sin againſt the Goſpel; 'tis a manifeſt Violation of the Laws of Union, and an open Rebellion againſt Chriſts Authority in his Church. And being ſo, it is no wonder that in the pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity 'twas branded with ſuch an infamous Character. For thus in the 31 Canon of the Apoſtles, 'tis called Ambition and Tyranny, and condemned by *Ignatius*, the Diſciple of S. *John*, as the Ἀρχὴ κακῶν, or Original of Evils, *Ep. ad Smyrn.* as a Sin that ſhuts men out of the Kingdom of Heaven, *Ep. ad Philad.* and by the *African Code* 'tis ſtiled a deſtructive, ſacrilegious Sin, *Con. Carth.* &c. *Can.* 100. and S. *Cyprian* makes it to be more Heinous than the Sin of the *Lapſi* that offered Sacrifice to Idols to avoid perſecution, and to be ſuch a Sin as Martyrdom it ſelf would not expiate, *de Unit. Eccleſ.* and *Dionyſius Alexandrinus* affirms, that to ſuffer Martyrdom rather than make a Schiſm in the Church, is as Glorious an Act as to die refuſing to offer Sacrifice to Idols, *Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. lib.* 6. And as they thus decry Schiſm, ſo on the contrary they extol Union, as the Nurſe of Piety, the Fence of Religion, the Quinteſſence and Extract of all Chriſtian Vertue.

And indeed, 'tis to the Unity of the Members of the Church among themſelves, that the Scripture attributes their Growth and Improvement in Piety and Vertue. For thus the Apoſtle tells us, not only that Charity (or a mutual Agreement among Church-Members) edifies, 1 *Cor.* viii. 1. but alſo aſſures us that the whole Church or Collection of Members becomes an *holy Temple*, and *an Habitation of God*, by being συναρμολογεμένη, compacted and

and closely united together in all its Parts, *Ephes.* ii. 21, 22. and *Ephes.* iv. 16. he tells us, that the Church *increases or improves unto the edifying it self in love by being closely compacted and united in all its parts and members*; and *Col.* ii. 19. he tells us, that 'tis not only from its *Union with Christ*, and those nourishing Influences that are thereby conveyed from him, that the Church *increases with the increase of God*, but also from its *being knit together*, or firmly united in all its Parts. And if Union be so necessary to the Growth and Perfection of the Church, it can be no less necessary to the Improvement of each particular Member of it. For,

1. Schisms and unnecessary Breaches of Church Communion do naturally sour the Tempers of men, and render them peevish and uncharitable towards one another. For the Separating Party must in their own Vindication be forced to accuse those they separate from of something that may be foul enough to justifie their Separation, and what they want in Reality they must make up in Pretence, otherwise they will be lookt upon as peevish and obstinate Schismaticks; and then the Party they separate from, will be sure to deem it self injured, and in its own Defence be forced to recriminate, and this will alarum the Separatists into greater Heats and Animosities, and so like two Flints dash'd together, they will be continually sparkling and spitting fire at one another, till they have kindled the quarrel into an inquenchable Flame. Whereas had the Dividers but continued their Communion, all this might have been prevented, and they might have easily continued their Charity, though

though they had retained the Opinions upon which they ſeparated. For had they but exerciſed that Modeſty and Goodneſs as not to prefer their own private Sentiments before the Reaſon and Peace of the whole Church, they would either have kept their Opinions to themſelves, or at leaſt not have advanced them into Principles of Separation; and ſo by continuing in Communion with that Party of the Church from whence they *diſſented* in Opinion, they would have declared that they judged their Errors to be *tolerable*. For by not Separating from them, they would have plainly manifeſted that they ſaw Reaſon enough to Unite upon the ſcore of thoſe Points in which they were agreed, but none to Diſunite upon the ſcore of theſe in which they differed; and conſequently, that they had a great deal of Reaſon to love, but none to hate and perſecute one another; and whilſt they mutually retained this good Opinion of one another, 'tis very unlikely that their little Differences ſhould cauſe any great Breaches in their Charity. Schiſm therefore being ſo deſtructive to our Charity, which is one of the leading Vertues of our Religion, muſt needs have a very malevolent Aſpect upon our Perſeverance. For he that from a Charitable Temper, relapſes into a ſpiteful and rancorous one, is Apoſtatiſed from one half of the Religion of a Chriſtian, and hath exchanged one of the faireſt Graces of a Saint, for one of the blackeſt Characters of a Devil. But then

2. Schiſms or unneceſſary Breaches of Church Communion do naturally lead to the foulest Hypocriſies. For he that ſeparates from a Church is a very bad man, if he hath not a great Opinion of, and

and Zeal for thoſe things upon which he ſeparates; which Zeal of his, when once he is actually ſeparated, will be much more inflamed, and that both by the Oppoſition of the Church he is ſeparated from, and the Inſtigation of the Sect he is ſeparated to; and ſo by Degrees that holy Fervour which ſhould animate him in the plain and unqueſtionable Duties of Religion, will blaze into a fierce Contention for thoſe little Opinions that conſtitute the Sect he is ingaged in. For our Nature being finite and limited in all its Operations, it is impoſſible we ſhould operate diverſe ways at once with equal Force and Vigour; but whatſoever Time and Attendance we beſtow upon one thing, we muſt neceſſarily ſubſtract from another. Now whilſt we continue in a peaceable Communion with the Church, we have no other uſe for our Zeal, but to inſpire our Devotions, to quicken our Vertues, and to fight againſt our Sins with it, and this all men agree is the beſt Uſe it can be put to; but when once we are entred into a *ſchiſmatical Separation*, we ſhall find other Employment for it; namely, to quarrel at Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitutions, to wrangle about Modes and Circumſtances of Worſhip, and contend for our trifling Speculations and Opinions. Which muſt neceſſarily weaken it in its nobler Operations, and render it more remiſs and indifferent in the great and indiſpenſible Duties of Religion; and whilſt 'tis thus impertinently buſied in picking Straws, and contending about *Mint* and *Cummin*, to be ſure it muſt more or leſs neglect the great and weighty things of the Law; and ſo proportionably as it grows warmer and warmer about little Opinions and Circum-

Circumſtances of Religion, it will be continually waxing cooler and cooler in the neceſſary and eſſential Duties of it; till at laſt 'tis wholly degenerated into Peeviſhneſs and Faction, and dwindled away into a fierce Contention about Trifles. That this is the natural Effect of Schiſm appears by too many woful Experiments. For how many Inſtances of men are there among our ſelves, who had once an honeſt Zeal for the Life and Subſtance of Religion, and made great Conſcience of *living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*, but afterwards becoming *Bigots* to ſuch a Sect or Party, have diverted the Stream of their Zeal into another Chanel, where its irregular Current hath only made a Noiſe, and fill'd the world with a loud and turbulent Clamour about little things, but as to thoſe great and important Duties upon which their Happineſs depends hath been profoundly mute and indifferent; and ſo their Religion, like an Hectick Body, hath by degrees been conſumed by its own Heats, whilſt that Zeal and Fervour which ſhould move and animate it hath been converted into its Diſeaſe, and wholly evaporated into Faction and Turbulency; and whilſt their Zeal is thus miſimployed about the little Trifles of their Sect, and they are ready to ſtart at an innocent Ceremony, and to ſwoon at the ſight of an indifferent Mode and Appendage of Religion, as if they were afraid leſt it ſhould infect them at a diſtance, they can ſwallow Camels though they ſtrain at theſe Gnats, and glibly digeſt the groſſeſt Immoralities.

3. And laſtly, Schiſms and unneceſſary Breaches of Church Communion do naturally lead to downright

right Irreligion. For when once a man departeth from an eſtabliſhed Church without a juſt Warrant, there is nothing can confine or ſet Shores to him, he hath no Principles that can ſtay him any where, or ſet any Meaſures of Changing to him. For when upon a meer Humour or Fancy he hath run from the Church to ſuch a Sect, what ſhould hinder him from running from that Sect to another, and ſo on from Sect to Sect, till he hath run himſelf out of all Religion? He is rolling down a ſteep Hill, and hath no Principles to ſtay him, ſo that 'tis impoſſible to determine whither he will go, or where he will ſtop; he may perhaps ſtay at ſuch an Opinion, but if he doth, it is by chance, and if he doth not, he will be endleſly rolling from one Opinion to another, and ſhifting his Church, as oft as his Almanack. For Schiſm is a large *Labyrinth*, that naturally divides and ſubdivides into infinite Paths and Allies, wherein a man may wander to Eternity, and the farther he goes, the more he may loſe himſelf; and then when he hath wandred a while out of one wild Opinion into another, and ſtill perceives that the farther he goes, the more he is diſſatisfied, 'tis a thouſand to one if he doth not at laſt *ſuſpect* and queſtion all Religion, as if the whole were an intricate maze of abſurd or doubtful Opinions, contrived on purpoſe to amuſe mens Minds, and intangle them in endleſs Perplexities. For the *Schiſmatick*, as I ſhewed before, doth commonly place a great Part of his Religion in that Opinion upon which he divides and ſeparates, ſo that if once he be diſſatisfied with this, as in all probability he will quickly be, having begun already to ring Changes, he will be under

under a great Temptation to mistrust the whole Religion to be as great an Imposture as he finds this darling Opinion is; especially after he hath run through several Sets of Opinions, and finds them at last to be all Delusions. For as weak Heads, when they perceive the Battlements shake, are apt to suspect that the Foundations are infirm; so weak Understandings will be ready to suspect even the fundamental Principles of Religion, when once they perceive those darling Notions totter which they have confidently presum'd to superstruct upon it. Upon this Account therefore I make no doubt, but that the *Atheism* of this present Age, is very much owing to its Sects and Divisions. For how many woful Examples have we of persons who had once a great deal of Zeal for, and Satisfaction in Religion, that upon their causeless Defection from the Churches Communion have run from *Sect* to *Sect*, and from one extravagant Opinion to another, till being at last convinced of the Cheats and Impostures of them all, they have discarded Religion it self, and made their last resort into Atheism and Infidelity? Since therefore Schism hath so many Mischiefs attending it, and such as do manifestly endanger our Perseverance in Religion, it highly concerns us, as we would hold out to the End in the Course of our Christian Warfare, to keep close to the Communion of the Church.

VI. To our final Perseverance in the Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that we should not stint our Progress in Religion (out of a fond Opinion that we are good enough already) to any determinate Degrees or Measures of Goodness.

For

For thus we are injoyned not only to have Grace, but ſtill to be *growing in it*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. and not only to *do the work of the Lord*, but to *abound in the doing it*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 58. and not only to *walk in all well-pleaſing to God*, but *to abound in ſo doing more and more*, 1 Theſ. iv. 1. *to forget what is behind*, *i. e.* the Degrees of Vertue and Goodneſs we have already attained, and to be ſtill *preſſing forward to the mark of our high calling*, Phil. iii. 13, 14. The ſenſe of all which is, that we ſhould not limit our ſelves to any preſent Attainments, out of a ſlothful Opinion that we are good enough already, but that we ſhould ſtill be proceeding on to farther and farther Degrees of Perfection. For Holineſs is every where injoyned in the Goſpel in unlimited and indefinite Meaſures, and our Progreſs in it hath no other Boundary than the farthermoſt Degree of poſſible Perfection. An Injunction which will keep us for ever ſufficiently imployed, and oblige us to Eternity to be ſtill aſpiring beyond our preſent Attainments; and the Neglect of this is doubtleſs the Occaſion of many a Mans final Miſcarriage. They aim at no more than what is abſolutely neceſſary to remove them from the Brink of eternal Perdition, and if they can but ſo far prevail againſt their Sin, as to arrive at the lowermoſt Degree of Sincere Obedience, and but juſt paſs the Line which ſeparates between a bad and good State, that ſo if they die as they are, they may hope to eſcape Hell, and arrive at ſome Degree of Happineſs, they think they have very fairly acquitted themſelves. But now beſides that that Line which parts thoſe two States of Sin and Grace is not ſo eaſily diſcernible, but that you may very

very probably be deceived, and imagine that you are got over it into the State of Grace, whilſt you are yet upon the Frontiers of the Dominion of Sin, and ſo may periſh at laſt at the very Mouth of your Harbour; beſides that, 'tis a fearful Sign that you are *yet in your Sins*, that you deſign no farther but juſt to eſcape that *Everlaſting Ruine* that attends them, which plainly ſhews that the *Fear of Hell* is the Soul of your Religion, and that there is not the leaſt Degree of true *Love to God* intermingled with it, without which your Religion will be altogether inſignificant; beſides all this I ſay, while you reſt in ſuch an imperfect State of Goodneſs, you dwell in the next Neighbourhood to a ſinful State, and ſo are in continual danger of returning thither again. For how is it poſſible you ſhould be ſafe, while you ſtay upon the Brink of that miſerable State out of which you are but juſt emerged and recovered, and have ſo many ſtrong Inclinations within you, concurring with the numberleſs Temptations without you, to thruſt you headlong back again into it? So that if you would be ſecure, it is not ſufficient for you juſt to get out of your ſinful State, and ſtay there, but you muſt ſtill be removing farther and farther from it, by proceeding on ſtill to farther Degrees of Perfection. For you muſt conſider that there is a vaſt Diſtance between a State of ſincere, and of confirmed Goodneſs, and that all the while you are paſſing on from the one to the other, you are more or leſs in Danger of relapſing. For you have been ſincerely good, ever ſince your firſt Entrance into a firm and hearty Reſolution of Amendment; but alas ſince that, how many times have you been

been in danger of relapſing into your old ſinful Courſes again? What ſtrong Contentions have there been between your *Fleſh* and your *Spirit*, your bad Inclinations, and your pious Reſolutions? and though the later hath been moſt commonly victorious, yet how often hath it been yielding, yea, how often hath it been vanquiſht? inſomuch that if you had not by a quick Repentance revived it immediately, it had been dead long ſince, and you had been as much enſlaved to your Luſts as ever. And from theſe dangers you will never be wholly free, till you have utterly extinguiſht your vicious Inclinations, and in-wrought all the Vertues of Religion into your Natures; and then you will be arrived to that confirmed State of goodneſs, from which it will be morally impoſſible for you to revolt. If therefore you would ſecure your Perſeverance to the End, beware you do not limit your ſelves in the Way; for though if you die but juſt ſincerely good, you ſhall certainly eſcape Hell; yet in all probability you will not be long ſincerely good, unleſs you be ſomething more; that is, unleſs you proceed in the Degrees of Vertue, and do more and more ſuppreſs your evil, and improve your good Diſpoſitions and Inclinations. For ſo long as there remains in you any Luſt to evil you will be in Danger of being betrayed by it; and the ſtronger that Luſt is, the more it threatens your deſtruction. So that you can never be ſafe, ſo long as you have an Enemy alive in your Breaſt, and whilſt you reſt in any Attainment on this ſide the confirmed State of Vertue, in which there is an utter Extinction of all evil Inclinations, you are more or leſs in Danger, proportionably

as you are more or leſs diſtant from that happy Period.

VII. To our final Perſeverance, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould frequently entertain our ſelves with the proſpect of our Mortality, and indeavour to compoſe our ſelves before-hand into a good Poſture of dying. For thus we are called upon in this our militant State *to conſider our latter end*, Deut. xxxii. 29. and by the Examples of the beſt men are invited *to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom*, Pſalm xc. 12. and *to wait till our change comes*, Job xiv. 14. to which End we are put in mind that *here we have no abiding City*, Heb. xiii. 14. and *that 'tis appointed for all men once to die*, Heb. ix. 27. and *that our life is even as a vapour, that appears for a little time, and then vaniſhes away*, James iv. 14. and to this purpoſe the Apoſtle applies this Conſideration, 1 *Cor.* vii. 29, 30, 31. Now *this I ſay, brethren*, (that is, of our Abode and Continuance here, upon which he exhorts us to compoſe our ſelves to a great Indifferency as to the things of this World,) *it remains that both they that have Wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoyce as though they rejoyced not, and they that buy as though they poſſeſſed not, and they that uſe this world as not abuſing it, for the faſhion of this world paſſes away, i. e.* ſince your Time here is very ſhort, indeavour before-hand to looſen your ſelves from this World, and to put your ſelves into a fit Poſture of leaving it; for 'tis but a ſhort Scene that will quickly be ſhifted, and then there will an eternal State of things ſucceed.

And

And indeed ſince to die well, is the laſt Act and final Conſummation of our Chriſtian Warfare, it muſt needs highly concern us to arm and prepare our ſelves for it before-hand, leſt we loſe the bleſſed Prize by ſtumbling juſt at the Goal, and after a long Voyage miſcarry for ever within Sight of Harbour. For in the hour of Death we throw our laſt Caſt for an Eternity of Happineſs or Miſery, and how much are we concerned to throw that well, upon which ſo vaſt a Stake depends? O! 'tis a ſerious thing to die, to paſs this dark Entry of Eternity, through which as we go right or wrong we are made or undone for ever. For to carry us right through, 'tis not a few death-bed Sorrows, or good wiſhes, a few extorted Promiſes, or forced Reſolutions, or frightful Prayers, or *Lord have mercy upon us*, will ſerve the turn; O! no, it is an expenſive Paſſage, which we ſhall never be able to defray, unleſs we carry along with us a large Stock of ſpiritual Preparations. We ſhall have need of a ſtrong and active Faith, of a Mind well furniſhed with wiſe Conſiderations, of a deep, a large, and a tried Repentance, an unconſtrained Charity, a confirmed Patience, a profound Submiſſion to the Will of God, and a well-grounded Hope of a bleſſed Eternity. For without all theſe together, we ſhall be very ill-accoutred to die, and run a dreadful Hazard of miſcarrying for ever. And theſe are ſuch things as do not uſually ſpring up like *Muſhromes* in a Night, or in the few diſturbed Moments of a dying Time, but do ask a much larger and ſerener Seaſon to grow and ripen in. So that if we mean to die well, and ſo come off victoriouſly in this laſt Act of our

ſpiritual Warfare, we muſt now, while we are well, be frequently entertaining our Meditations in the *Charnel-houſe*, and read *Lectures* to our ſelves upon the *Skeletons* and *Deaths-heads* there, theſe Emblems and Repreſentations of our approaching Mortality, and from them take ſuch lively Pictures of the King of Terrors, as may render his grim Viſage and fearful Addreſſes ſo familiar to us, as that our Thoughts may be before-hand accuſtomed to the manner of his Approaches; with what an Army of Diſeaſes he is wont to lay Siege to the Fort of our Life, how in Deſpight of all the Reſiſtances of Nature he plants and quarters them in our Veins or our Arteries, our Stomachs or our Bowels, and from thence infeſts us all over with continual Anguiſh and Pain; how when he hath tired and exhauſted us with his continued Batteries, and worn out our Strength with a ſucceſſion of weariſom Nights to ſorrowful Days, he at laſt ſtorms the Soul out of all the Out-works of Nature, and forces it to retire into the Heart; and how when he hath marked us for dead with a Baptiſm of clammy and fatal Sweats, he ſummons our weeping Friends to aſſiſt him to grieve and vex us with their parting Kiſſes and ſorrowful Adieus; and how at length, when he is weary of Tormenting us any more, he ruſhes into our Hearts, and with a few Mortal Pangs and Convulſions, tears the Soul from thence, and turns it out to ſeek its Fortune in the wide World of Spirits, where 'tis either ſeized on by Devils, and carried away to their dark Priſons of *Sorrow* and *Deſpair*, there to languiſh out its life in a diſmal Expectation of that dreadful Day wherein

wherein it muſt change its bad Condition for a worſe; or be conducted by Angels to ſome bleſſed Abode, there to remain in unſpeakable Pleaſure and Tranquillity, till 'tis Crown'd with a glorious Reſurrection. Now ſince 'tis moſt certain that we muſt all one time or other experience theſe things, but moſt uncertain how ſoon; how much doth it concern us to think of them before-hand, and to forecaſt ſuch Proviſions and Preparations for them, as that whenſoever they happen we may not be ſurprized. For beſides that the frequent Meditation of death will familiarize its Terrors to us, ſo that whenſoever it comes, our Minds which have been ſo long accuſtomed to converſe with it, will be much leſs ſtartled and amazed at it; beſides that, it will wean us from the inordinate Deſire and over-eager Proſecution of the things of this World, which, as I told you before, are the Snares with which our Vices do too often intangle us; beſides all this, I ſay, it will put us upon laying in a Store of ſpiritual Proviſions againſt that great Day of Expence. For he that often conſiders the dreadful Approaches, the concomitant Terrors, and the momentous Iſſues and Conſequents of Death, muſt be ſtrangely ſtupefied if he be not thereby vigorouſly excited to fore-arm and fortifie himſelf with all thoſe Graces and Defences that are neceſſary to render it eaſie, ſafe, and proſperous.

VIII. To our final Perſeverance in the Chriſtian Warfare, it is alſo neceſſary that in order to the putting our ſelves into a good Poſture to die, we ſhould diſcharge our Conſciences of all the Reliques and Remains of our paſt guilt. For ſo

we are commanded to take care *that our hearts be ſprinkled from an evil conſcience*, Heb. x. 22. and *to hold faith and a good conſcience*, 1 Tim. i. 19. and *to make this our rejoycing, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we have had our converſation in the world*, 2 Cor. i. 12. In a word, *to live in all good conſcience*, Acts xxiii. 1. and *to have a conſcience void of offence, towards God and towards men*, Acts xxiv. 16. Which though they are General Duties, do neceſſarily imply this Particular, that we ſhould very nicely and curiouſly examine our Conſciences, thoſe faithful Records and Regiſters of our Actions, and where-ever we find the leaſt *Item* of an uncancelled Guilt, immediately croſs it out by a hearty Sorrow for, and moral Revocation of it. For notwithſtanding we may have in the general repented of all our paſt Sins, yet there are ſome Sins, which, notwithſtanding we re-act no more, do leave a laſting Guilt upon the Mind, which nothing can cancel but our actual revoking and unſinning them. As ſuppoſing that I have heretofore either by my bad Counſels or Example ſeduced other men into wicked Courſes; it is not ſufficient for the Expiation of my Fault, that I my ſelf abſtain from thoſe wicked Courſes for the future, but I muſt indeavour to undo the Miſchief which I have done to others by them, and by a ſolemn Recantation of my paſt Follies, by Perſuaſion and good Counſel, and the Application of all other pious and prudent Means, indeavour to reduce thoſe whom I have formerly perverted. For till I have done this, I wilfully permit the miſchievous Effect of my Sin to remain; and if when I have wounded another, I ſuffer him

to

to periſh without taking any care of his Cure, I am guilty of his Murder though I never wound him more. Suppoſe again, that I have injured another by any malicious Slander or Calumny; it is not enough to acquit me of the Guilt of it, that I ceaſe to ſcandalize him for the future, but I muſt alſo endeavour by a free Retractation to vindicate his injured Name from the ill Surmiſes of thoſe to whom I have aſperſt him; for ſo long as his Reputation ſuffers through my not Retracting the Calumnies I have caſt upon it, I wilfully perſiſt to defame and calumniate him, and ſo long the Guilt of it muſt ſtick and abide upon my Conſcience. Once more, ſuppoſe I have injured another in his Eſtate, either by Theft, or Fraud, or Oppreſſion, it will not be ſufficient to acquit me, that for the future I forbear defrauding, forcing, or ſtealing from him any more, but, if it be in my Power, I muſt make Reſtitution of all that I have wrongfully deprived him of; and that to himſelf, if he be living, or if not, to thoſe that ſucceed him in his Rights, and for want of ſuch, to the Poor, who by Gods Donation have the Propriety of all ſuch Wefts and Strays as have no other Owner ſurviving. For it's certain that my wrongful Seizure of what is another mans, doth not alienate his Right to it, ſo that he hath the ſame Right to it while I keep it from him, as he had at firſt when I took it from him; and conſequently, till I reſtore it back to him, I continue to wrong him of it, and my detaining it is a continued Repetition of that Fraud, or Theft, or Oppreſſion by which I wrongfully ſeized it; and whilſt I thus continue the Sin, 'tis impoſſible but the Guilt of it muſt ſtill abide

upon me. In theſe Caſes therefore it concerns us to be very nice and curious in examining our Accounts, to ſee if there be any of theſe Scores yet uncancelled, any of theſe bad Effects of our Sin yet remaining. For if any ſuch matter appear in our Accounts, it concerns us as much as our everlaſting Intereſt amounts to, to uſe all preſent Care and Diligence to diſcharge it, that ſo before Death ſummons us to give up our Accounts to the great Auditor of the World, all Scores between him and us may be even'd and adjuſted. And indeed if we would be ſafe, it vaſtly imports us to leave as little as may be to do upon a Death-bed; for that is moſt commonly a very improper State for religious Action; ſince, for all we know, we may be diſtracted in it by a Fever, or ſtupefied by an Apoplexy, or deprived of the Uſe of Reaſon by the inſufferable Torments of a Stone; either of which will render us incapable of every thing, but Dying. Or, if neither of theſe ſhould happen, yet to be ſure a dying State will bring Work enough with it; Sorrows and Care enough, Fears and Impatiencies enough to exerciſe all our Virtue, and imploy all our Reaſon. So that if we carry with us to our Death-bed any Item or Relique of uncancell'd Guilt, 'tis a thouſand to one but in the Hurry of dying we ſhall leave it uncancell'd, and be arreſted for it by the Divine Juſtice when we come into Eternity. Wherefore, as we would prevent this fatal Iſſue of our Chriſtian Warfare, it concerns us now we are well, to make a diligent Inſpection into our Conſciences, to ſee if there yet remains any old Reckonings of Guilt undiſcharged by us; and if there be, not to give reſt to our Eyes, nor

ſlumber

ſlumber to our Eye-lids, till by an actual unſinning and Revocation of the Facts, we have totally croſſed and diſcharged them. But then becauſe many of theſe may ſlip out of our Mind, and ſo be paſt Recovery;

IX. To the happy Concluſion of this our Chriſtian Warfare, 'tis alſo neceſſary that to Compenſate, ſo far as we are able, for theſe Reliques of Guilt in us, we ſhould take care to redeem the time we have formerly miſ-ſpent in ſinful Courſes, by being doubly diligent in the exerciſe of all the contrary Vertues, and the doing all the contrary Good we are able. For of all the outward Bleſſings that God affords us, our Time is incomparably the moſt precious and ineſtimable; and therefore though he gives us his other Bleſſings in great Variety, and provides for us a plentiful Choice of Meats, Drinks, and Raiment, yet in the Diſtribution of our Time he ſeems to be more ſparing and ſtrait-handed; for he gives it not to us in Rivers, but Drop by Drop, & Minute after Minute, ſo that we can never enjoy two Moments together, but when-ever he gives us one, he always takes away another. And yet, good God! what Waſte do we make of theſe precious Drops of which thou art ſo nice and ſparing? How great a part of it do we conſume in our Childhood upon the indifferent Vanities of Nuts and Rattles, and afterwards upon the much more ridiculous and unreaſonable ones of our vicious, profuſe, and extravagant appetites? So that by that time we come to a ſerious Proſecution of the great End of our Beings, the main Part of our time is uſually elapſed beyond revocation. How much therefore doth it

it concern us, after we have ſo prodigally ſquandered away the greateſt part of the Treaſure of our Time, to make the beſt Improvement of the ſmall Remainder? that ſo we may at leaſt Morally recover, that which is Phyſically irrecoverable. For though we cannot cauſe the paſt Minutes we have ill ſpent to be preſent again, yet we can redouble our Diligence for the future, and thereby render every one Minute to come equivalent to every two that are paſt. For by a double diligence we may live as much in one Day, as we can in two by a ſingle, and conſequently, by doubly improving that Part of our time which is yet good and to come, we may morally retrieve that Part which is loſt and gone.

This therefore the Goſpel requires at our hands, that after we have lived out a great part of our Time to no purpoſe, we ſhould from thenceforth live much in a little while, and retrieve our *paſt* Negligence by our *future* Diligence, and redeem the Time we have ſpent upon our Luſts, by exerting the contrary Vertues more vigorouſly for the future; that the more prophane we have been for the time paſt, the more devout we ſhould be for the time to come; that the more we have abounded heretofore in Frauds and Oppreſſions, the more we ſhould abound hereafter in Charity and Alms; that the more induſtrious we have been to ſeduce and debauch men, the more zealous we ſhould be to reduce and reclaim them; and by our future Candor and Charitable Conſtruction of men, indeavour to compenſate for the Malice of our paſt Slanders and Defamations. Thus *Epheſ.* iv. 28. *Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more*; ay, but that

that is not enough, but he muſt alſo indeavour to redeem his paſt Thefts by a more vigorous Exerciſe of the contrary Vertue for the future; *but rather let him labour, working with his own hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs*; So alſo, *Dan.* iv. 27. *Break off thy ſins by righteouſneſs, and thine iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor, i. e.* whereas for the Time paſt the Courſe of thy Life hath very much abounded with Cruelty and Injuſtice, do thou now indeavour to redeem the Guilt of it, (for ſo the *Hebrew* Verb ſignifies,) by exerting more vigorouſly the contrary Vertues, *viz.* of Juſtice to all, and of Mercy to the poor and afflicted. And to this Purpoſe S. *Paul*'s Example is propoſed to our Imitation, who, becauſe for the Time paſt he had been a great Perſecutor of Chriſtianity, did for the future labour more abundantly than any other Apoſtle to advance and propagate it, 1 *Cor.* xv. 9, 10. The Obſervance of which Rule is highly neceſſary to the reducing this our Warfare to a proſperous Iſſue. For, as I told you before, there are many Sins which after we have forſaken the Practice of them, do ſtick ſuch a guilt upon the Conſcience, as without our undoing them, ſo far as we are able, is not to be wiped off; ſuch as wicked Counſel, malicious Detraction, and unjuſt Gain, all which we are bound, ſo far as 'tis in our power, not only to avoid, but actually to revoke. But alas! there are many of theſe which in a long Courſe of Sin are utterly forgotten by us, and conſequently are paſt Revocation, and in this Caſe all we can do to take off the Guilt of them, is in the general Courſe of our Lives to abound in the practice of the contrary Vertues,

Vertues, and to do the utmost Service we are able to the Souls, and good Names, and Bodies of men. For Charity, saith the Apostle, *shall cover a multitude of sins*, 1 Pet. iv. 8. that is, when it appears by the Abundance of our Charity, that we would abolish and repair all the Injuries we have done, if it were in our Power, God in this Case will accept the Will for the Deed, and deal as mercifully by us as if we had actually done it. For if it appear in his Sight that we would do it if we could, we are in his Account as truly obedient to him as if we had actually performed it, and consequently shall be dealt with by the same Proportions of Mercy. But 'tis only an extraordinary Charity that can evidence this; since what is ordinary we are obliged to though we had no past Injuries to abolish; but to ensure our Reconciliation with God, it is requisite that we should evidence to him our sincere willingness, to do not only what we should have been obliged to if we had not been injurious, but also what we are obliged to since we have been injurious. Now as Actual Reparation, so far as we are able, is necessary to evidence this, when we remember the Injuries we have done, so an extraordinary Charity is no less necessary to evidence this, when we have forgotten them. And this I suppose is the meaning of that Parallel Passage of *S. James*, *chap.* v. 20. *He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*, *i. e.* by such an illustrious Act of Charity to the Soul of his Brother, he shall obtain Pardon of God for many of those forgotten Injuries which he hath formerly done, and is now no otherwise able to repair. So

that

that if we would make ſure Work of our Chriſtian Warfare, and aſcertain its being finally Crowned with Succeſs; as in general we muſt indeavour to redeem the paſt time we have ſpent in vicious Courſes by abounding in the Practice of the contrary Vertues; ſo in particular, if for the time paſt we have lived in any of thoſe injurious Courſes which do naturally fix a more laſting Guilt upon the Mind, we muſt take care not only to repair, ſo far as we are able, thoſe Injuries we remember, but alſo to wipe off the Guilt of thoſe we have forgotten, by an extraordinary Charity and Beneficence, by laying hold of all Opportunities to do Good, and indeavouring in our ſeveral Stations, according as God hath inabled us, to reduce the Souls, relieve the Bodies, and vindicate the Reputation of our Brethren.

X. And laſtly, To our final Perſeverance in well-doing, it is alſo neceſſary that we ſhould labour after a Rational and well-grounded Aſſurance of Heaven. I put this in the laſt Place, becauſe 'tis uſually the laſt attained, and is not to be preſently expected and catch'd at as ſoon as we are entered into a religious State. For there are a great many Stages of Religion to be paſt, before we can modeſtly expect to arrive at Aſſurance. In the Beginning of our Religion, when we are juſt recovered out of a vicious State, we cannot but be ſenſible, if we do at all underſtand our ſelves, that we are as yet in a great deal of Danger, and do border ſo very near upon that bad State we are eſcaped from, that 'tis almoſt impoſſible to diſtinguiſh whether we are in or out of it. For though we are fully purpoſed and reſolved againſt it, yet we

we cannot well divine what will be the Iſſue of it. Our Reſolution is yet ſo young, ſo raw and unexperienced, and beſieged with ſo many powerful counterſtriving Inclinations, that we cannot confide in it without great Folly and Preſumption. For till ſufficient Trial hath been made of it, for all that we know, it may prove to be only a Godly Mood, or a ſhort Lucid Interval between the raving Fits of our Luſt and extravagant Affections, which in a few days perhaps may return again, and utterly alienate and diſtract us from all our ſober Counſels and Purpoſes. And if it ſhould ſo happen, that which we now look upon as our Cure and Recovery, will prove but an Intermiſſion of our Diſeaſe. And when for ſome time we have tried our Reſolution, and found that it hath bravely reſiſted thoſe Temptations that have hitherto aſſaulted it, yet we cannot preſently be reaſonably aſſured of it, conſidering the ſickleneſs and Inconſtancy of our Nature. For it may be it hath not been yet aſſaulted on the weak Side, or it hath not been *nick'd* with a ſeaſonable Temptation, or it may be we may be more remiſs and careleſs another time, or more vehemently inclined to a vicious Compliance; and then thoſe Temptations which we have hitherto conquered, may captivate and ſubdue us. And if it thus happen, that which we now look upon as an everlaſting Breach between us and our Luſts, may prove only a Pet or ſhort Diſtaſte, and like the Fallings out of Lovers end in the renewing of Love. And till we have made ſome conſiderable Progreſs in the mortification of our ſinful Inclinations, and the Acquiſition of their contrary Habits, our Religion will have

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ſo many Flaws, Defects, and Imperfections in it, as will give us great Reaſon, if we have any modeſty in us, to be very fearful and jealous of it. But ſince without Sincerity in Religion we can have no Title to Heaven, it hence follows, that without a clear Senſe of our Sincerity, we can have no Aſſurance of our Title to it; and ſuch a clear Senſe as is neceſſary to found ſuch an Aſſurance on, is not to be acquired, you ſee, without a thorow Trial of our Reſolution in a long and vigorous Courſe of Religion. So that for men to be immediately ſnatching at Aſſurance, as ſoon as ever they are entred into a good Life, argues them not to be ſo ſenſible, as they ſhould be, of their own Imperfection and Frailty; they ought in Modeſty to expect a while, and not conclude too ſoon for themſelves, till they have made a thorow Trial of their Reſolution; and in the mean time to ſtrive on, in Hope that by the Bleſſing of God concurring with their Endeavours, they ſhall at laſt attain ſuch a certain Senſe and Feeling of their own Sincerity, as will be ſufficient to infer a firm and rational Aſſurance. For Aſſurance being the Top of Chriſtian Attainment, we muſt aſcend to it gradually, by the intermediate Staves and Rounds of a tried and laſting Obedience, and not leap up in an inſtant before we have taken all the Steps and Degrees that lead thither.

But though we ought not to be too forward in our Aſſurance, yet we are bound to labour after it in a due and regular Way; that is, to perſiſt in our Obedience till we have reduced our inward and outward Motions to ſuch a Degree of Conformity to the Standard of the Goſpel, as that upon

upon comparing our ſelves with it, we may be able without Flattery or Preſumption to conclude our own Sincerity and Uprightneſs. I know there is a much ſhorter Paſſage to Aſſurance, which ſome of late have pretended to; and that is, by certain unaccountable Incomes and Manifeſtations of Gods Spirit, who, as they pretend, doth immediately whiſper and reveal to them their Title and Intereſt in Heaven. But this alas! is too much like the *North-Eaſt* Paſſage to the *Indies*, which is ſhorter indeed, if it could be found, but ſo very dangerous, that I doubt there are but few that attempt it but miſcarry, and 'tis well if they do not finally periſh in the Diſcovery. Not that I do in the leaſt doubt but God doth many times ſuggeſt and whiſper unſpeakable Comforts and Aſſurances to the Minds of good men; but then it is to be conſidered that this is an Arbitrarious Gift, which he ſeldom, if ever, beſtows but in extraordinary Caſes, when 'tis neceſſary to encourage us to ſome great Work, or to ſupport us under ſome extraordinary Suffering. For he is a wiſe and careful Father of his Children, and knows 'tis much more neceſſary for us to be good, than to be raviſhed and tranſported; and that ſuch high Cordials are neither proper nor ſafe for us but in great Extremities; and therefore for us to expect that he ſhould make them our ordinary Food and Entertainment is an Argument of our Childiſh Ignorance and Preſumption. But though ſuch immediate Whiſpers and Revelations may ſerve to good Purpoſes in a Pinch of Extremity, yet are they by no means to be built upon as the Foundations of our ordinary, ſtanding Aſſurance. For ſo long

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as there is an evil Spirit without, and a disordered Fancy within us, that can imitate these Whispers, we shall be continually liable, so long as we put Confidence in them, to all the Cheats and Impostures of natural and Diabolical Enthusiasm, and unavoidably mistake many an Injection of the Devil, and many a warm Flush of Fancy, or brisk Fermentation of melancholy Humour, for a Whisper and Testimony of the Spirit of God, and by this means be often lull'd into false Confidences and Assurances, which like Golden Dreams will vanish when we awake, and leave us miserably disappointed. That assurance therefore which we are to aim at, must be founded in the Testimony of a good Conscience, and inferr'd from the Sense of our own Integrity and Uprightness.

And this we are commanded to indeavour after; so *Heb.* x. 22. we are bid *to draw near unto God*, ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως, in *Confidence*, or *full assurance of Faith*, that is in a firm Persuasion of Gods Love to us, and our Interest in his Promises; which Persuasion is to be founded upon an inward Sense of our having *our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies wash'd with pure water*; and accordingly, *Heb.* vi. 11. *to be diligent in good works, to the full assurance of hope unto the end*, *i. e.* to be so diligent in our Duty as that we may thereby acquire such a full Assurance of our Reward as may inable us to continue and hold out to the End. For St. *John* tells us, that 'tis by the Integrity of our Vertue, and particularly of our *love to one another*, that we are *to assure our hearts before God*, 1 Joh. iii. 14, 19. for, saith he, *ver.* 21. *If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confi-*

dence towards God; and for this purpoſe among others, the ſame Apoſtle tells us he *wrote this Catholick Epiſtle*, that true Chriſtians might *know and be aſſured that they had eternal life*, 1 Joh. v. 13.

From all which 'tis evident, that 'tis our Duty to labour after ſuch an Aſſurance of Heaven, as naturally ariſeth from the clear and certain Senſe of our Sincerity towards God, and the firm Belief of the Promiſe of eternal Life, to which our Sincerity intitles us. For when we are ſo far improved in Religion, as that upon an impartial Surveigh of our ſelves we can feel our own Integrity, and ſenſibly perceive that our Intention is pure, our Reſolution fix'd, and our Heart intirely devoted to God, we may from thence moſt certainly infer our Title and Intereſt to the Promiſe of Heaven. So that to the obtaining this Aſſurance, all that we have to do is, ſo far to purifie our Intentions from ſiniſter Aims, and ſubdue our bad Inclination to our Reſolution of Obedience, as that when ever we reflect upon, and compare our ſelves with the Rule, our Conſcience may be able without any Diffidence to pronounce us ſincere; and then we may as certainly conclude our Intereſt in Heaven, as we can that Gods Promiſes are true; and if after we are thus far improved in Religion, we ſtill remain unaſſured, it proceeds not from the Want of ſufficient Evidence, but either from a melancholy Temper, or a weak Faith, or a miſinformed Conſcience; and which ſoever of theſe is the Cauſe of it, when that is once removed, we ſhall as plainly feel our own Sincerity, and therein our Intereſt in Heaven, as we do now our bodily Paſſions.

Paſſions. And having once attained this Aſſurance, 'twill animate our Hearts with an Heroick Courage againſt all Temptations, and carry us on with unſpeakable Alacrity through all the remaining Stages of our Duty; it will invigorate our Endeavours, and wing our Activity, and make us all Life and Spirit in the Exerciſes of our holy Religion. And as when the Chriſtian Army, after a tedious march towards the Land of *Canaan*, came within view of the *holy City*, and beheld afar off the Towers and Turrets of *Hieruſalem*, they were ſo Ecſtaſied with Joy that they made the Heavens ring with triumphant Shouts and Acclamations, and as if that Sight had given new Souls to them, ran on upon their Enemies with a Courage that forced Victory where-ever they came; ſo when a good Man after a long Progreſs from one Degree of Vertue to another, is got ſo far as that from a certain Senſe and Feeling of his own Sincerity he can diſcern the new *Hieruſalem* above, and his own Intereſt in it, that bleſſed Sight will fill him with ſo much *Joy*, *Courage* and *Alacrity*, that no Temptation for the future will be able to withſtand or interrupt him. So that his Conſcience will be always ringing with Acclamations of Victory, and the remainder of this March will be all a *Triumphal Progreſs* to him; and when he comes to the Concluſion of it, to die, and paſs the Gate of this bleſſed City, the firm aſſurance which he hath of Admittance, will diſpel the Fears, ſweeten the Troubles, and aſſwage the Pangs and Agonies of the dolorous paſſage. So that he will die not only with Peace, but with Joy, and go away into Eternity with *Hallelujahs* in his

Mouth. If therefore we mean to bring this our ſpiritual Warfare to a happy Concluſion, it concerns us now, while we have Opportunity, to labour after a wiſe and well-grounded Aſſurance of Heaven.

SECT. VI.

Containing certain Motives *to preſs men to the Practice of theſe Duties of* Perſeverance *in the* Chriſtian Warfare.

Having in the foregoing Section deſcribed all thoſe Duties which appertain to the laſt Part of our Chriſtian Warfare, to wit, final Perſeverance; and ſhewn how effectually they all contribute thereunto, I ſhall now according to my former Method, conclude with ſome Motives to preſs and perſuade men to the Practice of them; all which I ſhall deduce from the Conſideration of the great and urgent Neceſſity of our final Perſeverance, to which thoſe Duties are ſuch neceſſary Helps and Means. For unleſs we take in the Aſſiſtance of theſe Duties, in all Probability we ſhall never be able to hold out to the End; and unleſs we perſevere to the End, we are guilty of the moſt fatal and miſchievous piece of Folly in the world. For Conſider,

1. If after we have made ſome Progreſs in Religion, we wilfully relapſe, we ſhall go back much faſter than ever we have proceeded.

2. If once we totally relapſe, we ſhall thereby forfeit all the Fruit of our paſt Labour.

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3. We ſhall forfeit the Fruit of our Labour after we have undergone the greateſt Difficulty of it.

4. We ſhall not only forfeit the Fruit of our paſt Labour, but alſo render our Recovery more hazardous and difficult than ever.

5. We ſhall not only render our future Recovery more difficult, but alſo plunge our ſelves for the preſent into a far more Guilty and Criminal Condition than ever.

6. We ſhall not only render our ſelves for the preſent more guilty, but as a certain Conſequence of that, expoſe our ſelves, if we die in our Apoſtaſie, to a Deeper and more Dreadful Ruine.

I. Conſider, when once we have wilfully relapſed, unleſs we immediately recover, we ſhall go much faſter back, than ever we went forward. For in the Beginning of our religious Progreſs, we are fain to ſail for a great while againſt Wind, and Tide, againſt a ſtrong Gale of Temptation from without, and a rapid Stream of Inclination from within, and while we do thus, we muſt be contented to get our ground by Inches, and move forward by ſlow and inſenſible Degrees; but in all our wilful Apoſtaſies, we are carried on *ſecundo flumine*, with a full Drift of Temptation and Inclination. So that if when once we have wilfully ſinn'd we do not immediately check our ſelves by Repentance, in all Probability we ſhall be driven farther back in a Day, than we ſhall be able to get forward in a Week. For your Progreſs in Religion lying up Hill, but your Apoſtaſie down, you muſt expect when once you are falling, to deſcend much faſter than ever you aſcended, and to get far ſooner

to the Bottom again than you can to the Top, though you ſhould happen to fall juſt in the mid-way, and have no farther to the one than to the other. For 'tis hardly to be imagined what ſtrength a bad Inclination gets by a ſhort Repaſt and Gratification; how when it hath been almoſt pined away by a long Abſtinence, a Taſte of ſinful Pleaſure will raiſe and revive it, and render it as brisk and vigorous as ever; inſomuch that it uſually requires a great many Acts of Mortification, to re-extinguiſh that Life and Strength it acquires in one ſhort Gratification. For as the fierce *Tyger* after a long Confinement will lie down tamely in his Den, and by Degrees loſe all his Fierceneſs, and grow manageable and obſequious, but let him take but one warm Draught of Bloud, and his old ſavage Nature immediately revives, and he grows as cruel and outragious as ever; juſt ſo it is with our wicked Inclinations, which being reduced from their Exceſſes, and kept under the cloſe Confinement of a holy Reſolution, will by Degrees grow tame and gentle, and forget the alluring Reliſhes of Sin, but if once we ſuffer them to break looſe again, and to come at thoſe ſinful Pleaſures from which they have been a long while alienated, they will ſoon recover their natural Wildneſs, and become as headſtrong and violent as ever. Wherefore it mightily concerns us to have a great Care of all wilful Apoſtaſies; for to be ſure your firſt Slip will vehemently incline you to a ſecond, and that more vehemently to a third, and ſo, like men that are running-headlong down Hill, the farther you go, the more you will be preſt forward by your own Weight, and the harder 'twill be for you

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to ſtop and recover your ſelves. So that if you do not immediately ſtop, you will by a few Days Sin loſe back all the Ground you have got by many a Years Warfare; you will pull down more of your Religion by one wilful Sin, than you will be able to repair again by many a vertuous action; and like ſome Prodigal Drudges ſpend more in one mad Frolick, than you have earn'd by many a hard days Labour. And if you do thus, 'tis impoſſible you ſhould ever improve; for what you do in a Week, you will undo again in a Day, and ſo inſtead of preſſing forward, you will dance in a Circle, and always end where you begun. So that unleſs you go on and perſevere in well-doing, all your Strife & Warfare againſt Sin will be but like rolling of a *Siſyphus*'s Stone, which, after you have been a long while raiſing to the top of the Hill, will in a moment tumble down again upon you; ſo that either you muſt undergo the ſame Pains to raiſe it again, or lie down under it, & tamely ſuffer your ſelves to be cruſh'd into eternal Ruine by it.

II. Conſider, if after we have made ſome Progreſs in Religion we totally relapſe, we thereby forfeit the Fruit of all our paſt Labour. For ſo God himſelf by the Prophet pronounces in the Caſe, *Ezek.* xviii. 24. *When the Righteous turns away from his Righteouſneſs, and commits iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, ſhall he live? all his Righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned, in the treſpaſs that he hath treſpaſſed, and in the ſin that he hath ſinned, in them ſhall he die, i. e.* how good ſoever he may have been for the Time paſt, if he doth not perſevere to the End, but wilfully relapſe

into Folly and Wickedneſs, all the Vertue he hath exerciſed, and all the Good he hath done, ſhall be quite ſtruck off from his Accounts, and be never ſo much as mentioned to his Benefit & Advantage, but in that Wickedneſs whereinto he is faln he ſhall as certainly periſh as if all his Life had been a continued Act, or uninterrupted Courſe of Iniquity. So alſo, *Heb.* x. 38. *if any ſhall draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* And indeed this is a moſt neceſſary Effect of our Apoſtaſie; for by falling off from our Chriſtian Courſe, we put our ſelves back into the ſame State and Condition wherein we were before we enter'd upon it; and the Effect of all thoſe good things which we did from the Time we enter'd upon, to the Time we deſerted it, will be ſo voided and aboliſhed, that there will not remain the leaſt Trace or Footſtep of it in our Natures, but our Will will become as obſtinate again, our Affections and Appetites as wild and extravagant as if we had all along permitted them to run on in an uninterrupted Courſe of Iniquity. And having thus extinguiſht all the good Effects of our paſt Warfare, and rendred by our wilful Apoſtaſie our Natures as corrupt and depraved as ever, we ſhall thereby be expoſed again to the wrath and diſpleaſure of God. For Gods Love and Hatred are unvariably determined to the ſame Grounds and Reaſons, and herein conſiſts their Immutability, not that he always loves, or always hates the ſame perſons, out of a blind Fondneſs to the one, or unreaſonable Prejudice to the other, but that he always loves and always hates them for the ſame Reaſons; and he hath expreſly declared, that Goodneſs and Wickedneſs are the contrary Reaſons of this his contra-

contrary Affection to his Creatures; which if it be, 'twill hence neceſſarily follow, that as his Hatred muſt convert into Love to us when from wicked we become good, ſo his Love muſt convert into Hatred of us when from good we degenerate into wicked. Which Alteration of his Affection towards us, proceeds not from any change in his Nature, but from a change in ours; he always proceeds upon ſteady and unchangeable Principles, and is for ever fixt and conſtant to the Reaſons of his Love and Hatred; which he could not be, if he did not alter his Affection to us when the reaſon of it is alter'd, if he did not abominate us when he ſees us fallen and degenerated from that State of Goodneſs for the ſake of which he loved us, and took pleaſure in us. So that by wilfully retreating from our religious Progreſs, we do not only extinguiſh all thoſe good Effects which it had produced in our Natures, not only revive thoſe inveterate Luſts we had almoſt mortified, and blaſt thoſe tender Graces which we had therein acquired and improved, but as a Conſequence of this, we run out of Gods Arms and Embraces, and throw our ſelves headlong from thoſe glorious Hopes to which we have been all this while advancing with ſo much Labour and Difficulty. What a Madneſs therefore is it for men to think of retreating that have once actually ingaged in the Chriſtian Warfare, to ſurrender themſelves back into Captivity to their Luſts, after they have fought ſo many Combats againſt, and obtained ſo many Victories over them! O conſider but the great Pains you have been at, the many Prayers and Tears, Abſtinencies and Self-denials, Struggles & Contentions with your ſelves, that

that it hath coſt you to retrieve your ſelves from the Dominion of Sin and the juſt Vengeance of God; and is it not a thouſand Pities that all this ſhould prove loſt Labour in the End, and be render'd as fruitleſs and inſignificant to us as if it had never been? that after you have taken ſo much Pains to ſtem the difficult Tide, and are at laſt got within ſight of Shore, you ſhould now faint and yield to the Fury of it, and ſuffer your ſelves to be born down by it again into that Ocean of Sin and Guilt out of which you were ſo ſafely recovered? Wherefore as you would not render *your labour in vain in the Lord*, and utterly defeat your ſelves of all the Fruit of your Religious Endeavours, be ſtill perſuaded to ſtruggle and contend, to ſtrive and *preſs forward to the mark of your high-calling*. For if now you ſlacken or remit your Endeavours, and yield to the Current of Temptation, you will ſoon be driven down by it again as far from the Love of God, and from the Hope of Heaven, as ever you were in the moſt degenerate State of your Natures.

III. Conſider that if by wilfully ſinning we retreat from our Chriſtian Warfare, we ſhall forfeit the Fruit of our Labour after we have undergone the greateſt Difficulty of it. For, as I ſhewed above, the main Difficulty of the Chriſtian Warfare lies in the Entrance of it, and this I ſuppoſe you to have already paſt. You have already indured thoſe ſharp Pangs and Throes that are wont to accompany the Birth of a new Reſolution; you have undergone the hard Penance of a deep and through Conſideration, the ſharp Stings and Remorſes of a ſolemn and ſorrowful Repentance;

tance; you have forc'd your moſt Importunate Inclinations, and withſtood the moſt violent Counterſtruggling of a perverſe and degenerate Nature; you have conquered your Will in the Height of all its Obſtinacy and Reſiſtance, and reſcued it from the Arms of your Luſts when 'twas moſt inſlaved and captivated by them; all this you did, if you did any thing to any purpoſe, when you firſt entred upon this holy Warfare. And ever ſince you have been breaking the Strength of your evil Inclinations, and conquering the Antipathies of your Nature to your Religion; in which if you have made any Progreſs, you muſt by this Time have *broken the Heart* of the Difficulty of your Warfare, and have much leſs Oppoſition to contend with than ever. So that now in all Probability, there is nothing ſo difficult between you and Heaven, as that which you have already ingaged with and ſurmounted; and will you now turn your backs upon your Enemy, when his main Strength is ſpent, and you have already ſuſtained the moſt violent Shocks of his Power? If you had retreated at the firſt Onſet, when your Sin was ſeated in its Dominion, and you were yet but raiſing your Forces, and arming your Reſolution againſt it, it had been much more excuſable; for then you had the ſharpeſt Part of your Conflict to undergo, being to contend with a fluſht and a victorious enemy, who having as yet all his Strength about him, could not fail to put your Courage to a mighty Trial. But now to retreat, when you are paſt the worſt, and have gotten above half way through; when you have pulled down your Luſt from its Throne and Dominion, and ſo far ſubdued it

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to your Religion and your Reason, that you have henceforward no more to do but to pursue a Victory, which though you got with a great deal of Toil, you may finish with a great deal of Ease and Pleasure; now, I say, to retreat in such a prosperous Juncture, and give up the blessed Prize which you have been so long contending for, what desperate Madness is it! if you had never begun this Warfare, or yielded in the first Conflict of it, what a deal of Pains might you have saved? How many Prayers and Tears, Strugglings and Contentions with your selves might you have escaped and avoided, and at last been in as good a Condition, if not a better, than that wherein your Apostasie will certainly leave you? And when a man hath been so long taking Heaven by Storm and Violence, when he hath broken through so many Oppositions to come at it, and in despite of all the Darts of Temptation from without, and of all the Weights and Pressures of Inclination from within, he is gotten up as it were to the Top of the Scaling-Ladder, has laid his hands on the Battlements of Heaven, and is ready to leap in and take Possession of the Joys of it, what a Madness is it for him now to let go his Hold and tumble headlong down again into that Abyss of Sin and Misery out of which he had recovered himself with so much Labour and Difficulty! Especially considering,

IV. That by this our Relapse we shall not only forfeit the Fruit of our past Labour, but also render our Recovery more hazardous and difficult than ever. For what the Apostle pronounces concerning *Apostates* from Christianity, is in a great Measure

Meaſure appliable to thoſe who having ingaged in the Chriſtian Warfare, fall off from it again to their old ſinful Courſes; *it is impoſſible*, i. e. *'tis extremely difficult, for thoſe that were once enlightned, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the World to come; if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance*, *Heb.* vi. 4, 5, 6. For beſides that, by falling from his firſt Repentance, a man grieves and chaſes the Holy Spirit from him, without whoſe Aid he can neither ſtand when he is up, nor recover when he is fal'n; and having *Chaſed him away*, he cannot well expect that he will be ſo ready to return and co-operate with him after he hath treated him ſo rudely by quenching his Motions, unravelling his Workmanſhip, and extinguiſhing all thoſe heavenly Effects which his Grace had produced in his Soul. For how can this bleſſed Aſſiſtant of Souls but take it in great Diſdain to be thus mock'd and diſappointed, when he had been ſo induſtriouſly labouring for a wretches Good, to lift him out of the Mire wherein he was ſunk and periſhing; and when he had ſucceeded ſo far in his Labour as to help him quite out, and was waſhing and cleanſing his polluted Spirit, and dreſſing it for the Embraces of the Father of Spirits, to ſee this Wretch turn back after all, and plunge himſelf headlong into the Mire again, how can he but reſent ſuch an ungrateful Diſappointment of his Labour with unſpeakable Grief and Indignation? And if upon ſuch Reſentment he ſhould, as he juſtly may, wholly retire from him, and leave him for ever to wallow in his own Hearts Luſt; his Condition will not be only

only dangerous, but deſperate. What the bleſſed Spirit will do in this Caſe, I cannot certainly determine, becauſe he may do as he pleaſes, being totally releaſed by the Sinners Apoſtaſy from all Obligation of Promiſe. But it makes my Heart ake to think, how much Reaſon there is to fear that he will utterly forſake and abandon him, and not throw away any more of his Grace upon a Wretch on whom he hath already ſpent ſo much to no purpoſe. And if the heinous Affront which the bleſſed Spirit receives by your Apoſtaſy ſhould put him upon this Reſolution, you are damn'd above-ground, and everlaſtingly forſaken of all Hopes of Recovery. But beſides all this, (which one would think ſhould be ſufficient to ſtartle any ſober Man from making ſuch a deſperate Experiment) by falling off from your Repentance, you muſt needs be ſuppoſed to offer a mighty Violence to your Conſciences; which having been already awaken'd into a through Senſe of your paſt Sins, muſt neceſſarily reflect upon your preſent Apoſtaſy with unſpeakable Horror and Affrightment; which if it doth not preſently ſcare ye back again to Repentance, will put ye upon more deſperate Courſes than ever. For now if your Conſcience won't be quiet, you have no other Remedy but to ruffle with it, and out-brave its Horrours by being more couragiouſly wicked; and as thoſe barbarous Parents that ſacrificed their Children to *Moloch* were fain to make Noiſes round the burning Idol with *Drums* and *Timbrels* to drown their dying *Shrieks* and *Groans*, leſt they ſhould move them to Compaſſion; ſo when by your wilful Relapſes you have ſacrificed your Conſcience

to

to your Luſt, and it begins to *Shriek out* from among thoſe Flames of Guilt whereunto you have caſt it, you have no other remedy unleſs you repent immediately, but to make a Tophet round about it, and drown its Outcries in Exceſſes of Riot; to put your ſelves into a tumultuous Hurry of Wickedneſs and Folly, that you may not hear thoſe ill-boding Shrieks within, and to ſear over the Wounds of your Conſcience with a thick Cuſtom of Sinning, that they may neither bleed nor ſmart. So that if once you turn *Recreant* to your Chriſtian Warfare, you will be forced, in your own defence, to plunge your ſelves deeper into Sin than ever. For now you muſt ſin not only to gratifie your Luſts, but to ſtupefie your Conſcience, and this laſt you can never do without being exceſſively wicked. You muſt now be puny Sinners no longer, if ever you intend to ſin quietly, but reſolve to turn Heroes in Iniquity, and out-ſin your natural Senſe of Good and Evil. In order whereunto you muſt give your wounded Spirit *Gaſh* after *Gaſh*, and follow the *Blow* till you have left it paſt feeling; you muſt heap on Loads of guilt upon your Conſcience till with the continued Preſſure you have rendred it callous and inſenſible; and when by this means you have ſunk your ſelves deeper into Sin than ever (as you will doubtleſs ſoon do) how much more difficult and hazardous muſt your Recovery be? For now you will need much more Aſſiſtance than ever you did in your firſt Repentance, and have much leſs Reaſon to expect it. So that though I dare not ſay your Condition will be deſperate; yet I muſt tell ye 'twill be ſo fearfully dangerous, that unleſs God out of a peculiar Mercy

Mercy to ye, awake ye by ſome extraordinary providence, and at the ſame time co-operate with ye by an extraordinary Grace, you muſt certainly miſcarry for ever.

V. Conſider that by your deſerting of the Chriſtian Warfare, you will not only render your future Recovery more difficult, but you will alſo plunge your ſelves for the preſent into a far more guilty and criminal Condition than ever. For thus S. *Peter* determines in the Caſe, 2 *Pet.* ii. 20, 21. *If after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again intangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worſe with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteouſneſs than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment*; that is, by relapſing into thoſe ſinful Pollutions out of which they had been reſcued by the Belief and Knowledge of Chriſtianity, they have rendered themſelves much more guilty, than they were before when they were Infidels; ſo that if they had never been acquainted with the Goſpel, nor taken one Step in the Paths of its holy Commandments, it had been much better for them, and God would have been much leſs angry and diſpleaſed with them. For by our Apoſtaſie into a wicked Life, we do not only return back into as bad at leaſt, if not a worſe Condition than ever; but,

Firſt, We do alſo make void all thoſe Operations of the Spirit of God, by which we were ſo effectually perſuaded to undertake, and hitherto to proſecute the Chriſtian Warfare. By relapſing into a ſtate

ſtate of Sin again, we wilfully undo all that he hath been doing, we revive thoſe Luſts which he hath been mortifying, and root up thoſe Graces which he hath been planting and watering within us; and when with great Contrivance and Induſtry he hath dreſt and cultivated our Nature, pluckt up the Weeds of it and planted it with the Flowers of Heaven, we wilfully ſpoil and lay it waſte again, and turn his growing *Sharon* into a barren wilderneſs. So that beſides all that Guilt which ariſes from thoſe ſinful Courſes whereinto we are relapſt, we are now become guilty of the greateſt Outrage to the Spirit of God; we are guilty of deſtroying the deareſt Fruits of his Labour, of laying waſte his Incloſures, quenching his Motions, extinguiſhing his Graces, and ſtrangling all thoſe heavenly Effects which he by his powerful Goodneſs had produced in our Natures. And what a black Aggravation of our Guilt muſt it be, thus to baffle and diſappoint the Spirit of God? But then

Secondly, As by our Apoſtaſie we offer the rudeſt Affront to the Holy Spirit, ſo we commit the greateſt Violence both upon our Conſcience and Experience. For in all Apoſtaſies we ſin with an awakened Conſcience, with the Convictions of our Guilt glaring in our Eyes, and are fain to contend and ſtruggle with our own mind, before we can break through thoſe Checks and Reſtraints it lays upon us, which muſt needs be a great Aggravation of our Guilt. For the more light and perſuaſion a man ſins againſt, the more of Will and Malice there is in his Sin, and conſequently the more of Guilt. For what can be more Malicious, than

for a man to dare and defie his own Convictions, and charge into the very Mouth of them, while they are ſpitting fire, and roaring everlaſting ruine againſt him? This plainly ſhews him to be acted by a deſperate Reſolution, when for the ſake of his Luſts he dares confront the Terrors of his Conſcience, and rather than be barred the Enjoyment of them, he will plunge himſelf headlong into a foreſeen Ruine, and leap after them into Hell with his Eyes open. And yet thus we do in all our wilful Apoſtaſies; we ſin againſt the quickeſt Senſe of our Danger the loudeſt warnings of our Conſcience, and the cleareſt Convictions of our Reaſon; which being all moſt horrid Aggravations, muſt needs ſwell up our guilt to a monſtrous Proportion. Neither do we ſin only againſt our Conſcience, but alſo againſt our Experience. For it is to be ſuppoſed that we have made ſome Proof and Trial of Religion, and having done ſo, we muſt needs be ſenſible that there is nothing in it but what is reaſonable, and practicable, and highly for our Good; nothing but what tends to the Tranquillity of our Minds, the Peace of our Conſciences, and the Perfection of our Natures; and being throughly aſſured of all this, and that not ſo much by Diſcourſe as by our own Senſe and Experience, what a horrid Baſeneſs would it be, if notwithſtanding this we ſhould renounce and deſert it? If we had never tried it, we might have urged our Ignorance or Want of Experience as an Apology for our Refuſal to ſubmit to it; we might have pretended that for want of a more intimate Acquaintance with it, we lookt upon its Commands as impoſſible, or at leaſt as very difficult and altogether fruitleſs

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and ungrateful to humane Nature, and that if we had once complied with it, we must have presently renounced every thing that is pleasant and desirable, and from thenceforth have been contented to sigh away our Lives in unsufferable Severities and a melancholy Retirement from all the Joys and Festivities of humane Conversation; for such frightful Representations men that are unexperienced in Religion are apt to make of it; which though it be far from justifying, may in some Measure extenuate their Enmity to it. But you that have tried Religion, must needs have experienced that all this is false; that its Commands are easie enough to a willing Mind, and that the many Advantages they bring with them do abundantly compensate for their Difficulty; that they are so far from barring men any innocent Pleasure, or Comfort of humane Life, that they purifie the Pleasures of it, and render them more grateful and generous; that besides this, they bring mighty Pleasures of their own along with them, the Pleasures of a glorious Hope, a serene Mind, a calm and undisturbed Conscience, which are such as do far out-relish the most studied and artificial Luxuries; all this you cannot but know, if you have made any considerable Trial of a sober and well-advised Religion. So that if now you Apostatize, you will not only affront your Conscience, but your Experience too; and the past Sense you have had of the Goodness of Religion, will rise up in Judgment against ye, and for ever silence all the Excuses you can urge for your selves, and leave ye nothing to say, but that you were sick of your Ease, and tired with the Refreshments of Religion. But then

Thirdly, As your Apostasie will be a grievous Affront to the Spirit of God, and to your own Conscience and Experience, so 'twill be one of the foulest Dishonours that you can cast upon Religion. If you had never been ingaged in the Christian Warfare, the Honour of Religion could never have been so nearly touched by your wicked Courses, and all considering Men would have attributed your Enmity to it, to your Ignorance and want of Experience, and never have thought the worse of it when they saw it so contemptuously treated by one that was never acquainted with it. But if now you revolt into wicked Courses after you have made Trial of it, what will the World say? Look ye, here is one that hath made an Experiment of the Religion you so much celebrate, and which you extol and cry up for such a pleasant and amiable thing; if it were what you pretend, how comes it to pass that after so long Trial and Experience of it, this man should now at last renounce and forsake it? Which is such an Objection, as can be no otherwise solv'd but by demonstrating the man whose Apostasie started it, to be forsaken and abandoned of his Reason. For if upon the Trial he hath made of Religion, he had experienced it to be that good and grateful thing it is represented, it is not to be imagined he would ever have revolted from it, had he been capable to deliberate of his own Choices and Actions. And how can they that are Strangers to Religion forbear suspecting the Goodness of it, when they see a man, after Trial, and in his right Senses, declare by his Actions that Vice is better and more eligible than Vertue, and do behold the Pleasures of Sin preferr'd before

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the Joys and Satisfactions of Religion, by one that hath made a through Experiment of them both? So that by Apoſtatiſing into ſinful Courſes after a through Trial of Religion, we take an effectual Courſe to defame and ſcandalize it, to render it *a ſtone of ſtumbling and a rock of offence* to thoſe that have had but little or no Acquaintance with it; and if by our Example any ſhould be diſheartned either from entering into, or proceeding in the Chriſtian Warfare, their Bloud will be one day required at our Hands, and ſo we ſhall raiſe a moſt fearful Cry upon our ſelves, and have not only the Spirit of God and our own Conſcience and Experience, but alſo the Bloud of all thoſe Souls who have ſtumbled at our Apoſtaſie lifting up their Cries together to the Tribunal of God for a dire and ſpeedy Vengeance againſt us.

VI. Conſider, if after you have made ſome Progreſs in Religion you revolt into ſinful courſes, you will not only render your ſelves for the preſent more guilty, but, as a Conſequence of that, you will certainly expoſe your ſelves, if you die before your Recovery, to a deeper and more dreadful Ruine. For this we may depend upon, that the Judge of all the World will do righteouſly, and conſequently, that as on the one hand he will proportion his Rewards to our Services, ſo on the other he will meaſure his Puniſhments by our Guilts and Demerits; and if he thus proceed (as he moſt certainly will) how horrible is it to think of the black and diſmal Fate that hangs over the Heads of Apoſtates, whoſe Guilt being aggravated by thoſe above-named Circumſtances to ſuch a

prodigious Bulk and Magnitude, muſt be ſuppoſed to draw after it a Puniſhment proportionable? and if ſo, then doubtleſs the Portion of Apoſtates among wicked and miſerable Spirits will be the moſt wretched and deplorable. For beſides thoſe ſupernumerary Stripes they muſt expect to receive from God, as being Servants that have known their Maſters Will, and experienced the Goodneſs of it, and yet have finally refuſed to comply with it; their reflections on their own Apoſtaſie, and the Folly and madneſs of it will doubtleſs gall and torment them a thouſand times more than all the other Stings of their Conſcience together. For how muſt it inrage them againſt themſelves, to ruminate on their own Follies, as they are wandering through the Infernal Shades! O deſperate Creatures! from what glorious Hopes have we precipitated our ſelves into this diſmal State! We had once got a fair way onwards to Heaven, and were arrived within Sight of its bleſſed Shores: we had ſhaken off our Luſts, maſtered our Inclinations, and ſubdued our Wills to the Will of God; and in ſo doing had conquered the moſt difficult part of our Voyage; we had weathered the croſs winds of Temptation from without, and Stem'd the Tide of corrupt Nature within, ſo that had we but bore up couragiouſly a little farther, we that are now howling among damned Ghoſts, might have been triumphing with bleſſed Spirits. But O abominable Fools and Traitors to our ſelves! after all the ſucceſsful Pains we had taken to be happy, we have ſhipwrack'd our Souls at the Mouth of our Harbour; and to gratifie a baſe Luſt, have leapt headlong from the Brinks of the *Rivers of Pleaſure*, into

into this *Lake of Fire and Brimſtone.* And have we thus undone our ſelves, thus madly, thus without Pretence or Temptation! O! curſed be our Folly, curſed be our Luſts, and for ever curſed be we for harbouring and entertaining them! Thus will theſe miſerable People inceſſantly rave againſt themſelves, and with dire Reflections on their deſperate Follies for ever inrage and multiply their own Torments. So that were I deſcending to the bottomleſs Pit, and had but ſo much Time before I came there, as to make one Prayer more in my own Behalf, next to that of being wholly delivered thence, I know none I ſhould ſooner pitch upon, than this, *O Lord deliver me from that Portion of Hell, which thou haſt reſerved for Apoſtates.*

So that if now, that we have ſo far ingaged our ſelves in the Chriſtian Warfare, we ſhould be ſo mad as to retreat into our own ſinful Courſes, it had been a thouſand times better for us that we had never ingaged in it at all. For unleſs we repent of our Retreat, and come on again, we have taken a great deal of Pains in Religion to no other Purpoſe, but only *to treaſure up to our ſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath*, and heat the Furnace of our future Torments yet *ſeven times hotter.* Wherefore ſince the Matter is now reduced to this Iſſue, that if we revolt from our Chriſtian Warfare we ſhall not only defeat our ſelves of all the Fruit of our paſt Labour and Contentions, but alſo inhance our future Puniſhment; ſo that we muſt either reſolve to win Heaven by our Perſeverance, or ſink our ſelves into the nethermoſt Hell by our Apoſtaſie; let us pull up our Courage, and maugre all Temptations to the contrary, continue ſtedfaſt

and immovable in our Chriſtian Reſolution, remembring what the *Captain of our Salvation* hath promiſed, *Rev.* iii. 21. *To him that overcomes, will I grant to ſit with me in my Throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſate down with my Father in his Throne.*

CHAP. V.

Containing ſome ſhort Directions *for the more profitable reading the preceding Diſcourſe, and alſo for the Conduct and regular Exerciſe of our* Cloſet Religion *in all the different States of the* Chriſtian Life; *together with* Forms *of* private Devotion *fitted to each State.*

IN the foregoing Chapter I have indeavoured a full Account of all thoſe *inſtrumental Duties* of Chriſtianity by which we are to acquire, improve, and perfect the principal Vertues of it, in the Perfection of which Vertues, Heaven, which is the great End of Chriſtianity, conſiſts. And for the more diſtinct management thereof, I conſidered men under a threefold State; Firſt, as entering into the Chriſtian Life; Secondly, as actually ingaged in the Courſe of it; Thirdly, as improving towards Perfection by Perſeverance in it; and gave a diſtinct account of all thoſe Inſtrumental Duties that are proper to each of theſe States. And now that what hath been ſaid in that

that and the preceding Chapters may have its due Effect upon the Readers Mind, I have thought fit to reduce it to Practice by directing men,

Firſt, How to read and apply the ſeveral parts of it to their own particular States;

Secondly, By furniſhing them with ſome ſhort Rules for the more profitable Exerciſe of their private Religion in each of thoſe different States, together with Forms of private Devotion fitted to each State.

I. As to the firſt of theſe, it is to be conſidered, that to the making men ſincere and hearty Chriſtians, it is highly neceſſary that they ſhould have a right underſtanding, Firſt, of the Nature of the great and chief End which Chriſtianity propoſes to them; Secondly, of the Means by which that End is to be obtained; Thirdly, of the natural Tendency of all the Vertues of Chriſtianity towards this bleſſed End, and of the contrary Tendency of the oppoſite Vices towards their eternal Miſery and Ruine. Of all which I have indeavoured to give an Account in the three firſt Chapters of this Book. Wherefore I would adviſe the Reader

1. Carefully and ſeriouſly to peruſe thoſe Chapters wherein (becauſe I have been ſometimes forced by the ſublimity of my Argument to diſcourſe a little more abſtruſely than in any of the following Parts) it will be neceſſary for him to imploy more of his Thoughts and Conſideration, and not to content himſelf with a ſlight and curſory Peruſal. And when by a ſerious Conſideration of what hath been there diſcourſed, his Mind is fully

fully convinced what a kind of Heaven he is to expect hereafter, what kinds of Means are neceſſary to obtain it, how naturally all the Vertues of Religion do raiſe up mens Souls to Heaven, and how all the contrary Vices do as naturally ſink and preſs them down to Hell, it is to be hoped he will be fully perſuaded of the indiſpenſable Neceſſity of entring into the Chriſtian Life; which if he be, I would adviſe him,

2. Seriouſly to read over and conſider the firſt and ſecond Sections of the fourth Chapter, wherein are contained the ſeveral Duties which are proper to his State of Entrance into the Chriſtian Life, and alſo proper Arguments and Motives to ingage him to the Practice of them; which if he would read to good Effect, he muſt by no means content himſelf with a ſingle peruſal, but read them over at leaſt once a weak whilſt he continues in that State, till he fully comprehends the Meaning and Uſe of all thoſe Duties, and the Force and Cogency of thoſe Arguments; which if he do, it is to be hoped he will at laſt be reduced to a through and well-weighed Reſolution of forſaking his Sins and actually ingaging in the Chriſtian Life. Which being done I would adviſe him,

3. With the ſame Care and Frequency to peruſe the third and fourth Sections of the fourth Chapter, wherein are contained all the ſeveral Duties proper to this ſecond State of actual Engagement in the Chriſtian Life, as alſo ſundry Arguments or Motives to preſs and inforce them; and when by the Aſſiſtance of theſe Duties he hath continued for ſome time faithful and conſtant to his good Reſolution,

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4. Together with the third and fourth Section, let him often peruse and consider the fifth and sixth, wherein are contained the Duties appertaining to the third State of Emprovement and Perseverance in the Christian Life, together with some Considerations to inforce the Practice of them. All which I would earnestly persuade the pious Reader to read and consider over and over again, till his Mind is fully instructed in the Nature and Use of each Duty, and hath throughly digested the Force and Evidence of every Argument. And this may suffice for the first thing proposed concerning the profitable Method of reading this practical Treatise.

II. As for the second Part of it, which is that which I mainly design in this Chapter, *viz.* the *Rules* and *Directions* for the private Exercise of our Religion in each State of the *Christian Life*, together with the *Forms* of *private Prayer* fitted for each, take them in their following Order.

Directions for the more profitable Exercise of our private Religion *in the State of our* Entrance *into the* Christian Life.

In the *Morning* before you go into the World, enter into your Closet, and there consider with your self a while the miserable State you have reduced your self to by your past sinful Courses, the absolute Necessity of your forsaking them, and the possibility of your Recovery, if you heartily

heartily indeavour it; and then addreſs your ſelf to God in this following *Prayer.*

*O Moſt glorious and eternal God, thou art the fountain of Beings, the Father of Angels and Men, the righteous and almighty Governour of Heaven and Earth; from thy Throne thou beholdeſt all the Children of men, and their moſt ſecret Actions are open and naked to thy all-ſeeing Eye; and ſuch is the Purity of thy Nature that thou loveſt Righteouſneſs and hateſt Iniquity whereſoever thou beholdeſt it; with what Face then can I, a moſt miſerable polluted Wretch, appear in thy preſence, who by the paſt courſe of my Wickedneſs and Rebellion againſt thee, have not only rendered my ſelf guilty and juſtly obnoxious to thy eternal Diſpleaſure, but have alſo contracted ſuch obſtinate Diſpoſitions and Inclinations to ſin on, as without thy Grace and Aſſiſtance I ſhall never be able to conquer! O deſperate, vile, and ungrateful Wretch that I have been! I have renounced the God of my Being, and the Fountain of my Mercies; I have deſpiſed thy Goodneſs, trampled upon thy Authority, mock'd and abuſed thy Patience & long ſuffering, and in particular I muſt confeſs, to my own Shame and Confuſion, I have been wofully guilty of *. And now by theſe my manifold Abominations I have utterly undone my ſelf, unleſs thou take pity upon me. I confeſs I have forfeited my ſoul into thy hands, and if thou ſo pleaſeſt thou mayeſt juſtly caſt me away from thy Preſence, and make me a dire Example of thy Vengeance for ever.*

* Here make a particular Confeſſion of all thoſe ſinful Courſes you have lived in, together with all their aggravating Circumſtances of Impudence, Obſtinacy, and Ingratitude, &c.

ever. But I know, O Lord, that thou desirest not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should repent and live, and upon the Propitiation of thine own Sons bloud, thou hast declared thy self willing to receive returning Prodigals, and to be heartily reconciled to them, notwithstanding all their past Provocations. O that I could return, that I could but shake off those corrupt Inclinations which detain my wretched soul in Captivity! I am willing to contribute towards it whatsoever I am able, but alas without thee all that I can do will be utterly ineffectual. Wherefore for thy tender Mercies sake, for thy dear Sons and my Saviours sake, have pity upon a miserable Wretch, that without thy helping hand is lost for ever. And since thou hast given me thy Gospel as an outward means to save and recover me, O do thou inable me by thy blessed Spirit heartily to believe, and throughly to consider it. For which end I beseech thee to remove all sinful Prejudices from my Mind, that so I may impartially weigh those Evidences thou hast given me of the Truth of it; and do thou suggest them to my mind with such a clear and convincing Light, as that they may at last conquer my Infidelity, and beget in me a firm and lively Faith. And forasmuch as my mind is vain and roving, and utterly averse to all serious Considerations, O do thou, who art the Father of Spirits, and canst turn the Hearts of men which way thou pleasest, inspire good Thoughts into me, and imprint them upon me with such a Power and Efficacy, as that my wandring Mind may be reduced by them to a through Consideration, and my stubborn Will to a firm Resolution of Amendment. Particularly, I beseech thee to give me a right understanding of the urgent need I have of a Saviour, and of all those things which he hath done and suffered,

ſuffered, and is ſtill doing at thy right hand in order to the cleanſing my guilty and polluted Nature, and reſtoring me to thy Grace and Favour; that ſo hereby I may be fully convinced how odious my Sins are in thy ſight, how baſe and vile they have rendered me, and at what a mighty Diſtance they have ſet me from thee, and that being convinced of this, I may put on a holy Shame and Confuſion, and abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes before thee. Thou knoweſt, O Lord, it is not in my power to ſoften this hard and unrelenting Heart, and affect it with that Godly ſorrow which is requiſite to work a true Repentance. O do thou ſmite it with ſuch a ſharp and piercing ſence of my Sins, as may cauſe the flouds of unfeigned Grief and Contrition to guſh forth from it. Cauſe me to bleed for my ſins now, that I may not bleed for them for ever; and that having felt the Smart and Anguiſh of them, I may utterly deteſt and abhor them, and never be reconciled to them more. Thus do thou aſſiſt me, O good God, in the Exerciſe of all theſe Duties, till thou haſt throughly conquered my Will by them, and prepared it for a firm Reſolution to forſake all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world. And now that I am going into the world among thoſe very Temptations that have hitherto ſo miſerably captivated and inſlaved me, O let thy bleſſed Spirit be preſent with me to keep my drouſie Conſcience awake, and arm me againſt them with his holy Inſpirations, that ſo thoſe good Thoughts and Deſires which thou haſt at preſent excited in me, may ſtick faſt upon my Soul in the midſt of my worldly Occaſions, and never ceaſe importuning my Conſcience, Will, and Affections, till they have produced in me the happy Effect of a ſerious and hearty Repentance. All which

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I most earnestly beseech of thee even for pity sake to a poor perishing Soul, and for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose name and words I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

In the *Evening* when you find your self most fit for serious Thoughts, go into your Closet again, and consider coolly with your self, whether you are heartily willing to part with every Sin, and particularly with your beloved Sin, and to submit to every Duty, and even to those that are most contrary to your vicious Inclination; if you are not (as it's very probable you will not for some time) or if you find the least reason to suspect you are not, press your self anew with such divine Reasons as are most apt to affect you, with the Hope of Heaven, and the Fear of Hell, with the love of God and of your Saviour; represent your Obstinacy to your self with all its Baseness and Disingenuity, Madness and Folly, till you find your self affected with a sorrowful Sense of it, and then offer up this following *Prayer.*

O *Father of Mercies, and God of all Grace and Consolation, who art a ready help in time of need, look down upon me, I beseech thee, a miserable and forlorn Wretch, that have wilfully sold my self Captive to the Devil, and am now strugling to get loose from this my wretched Bondage into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. I know, O Lord, that I am striving for my immortal Life, and accordingly as I succeed I expect to be happy or miserable for ever. I have seriously considered the Reasons on both sides, and*

and am fully ſatisfied in my mind that there is infinitely more Force in thy Promiſes and Threats, than in all the Difficulties of my Duty and the Pleaſures of my ſin. But after all this, I find a Law in my Members warring againſt the law in my Mind, a perverſe Will that rejects the counſels of my Reaſon, that makes obſtinate Reſervations of ſome beloved Sins, and Exceptions to ſome particular Duties, in deſpite of all the perſuaſion of my Reaſon and Religion. So that after all my Endeavours I am ſtill detained in Captivity to the law of ſin that is in my Members, and am not able to incline my ſelf to an intire Reſolution of Amendment. O wretched man that I am who ſhall deliver me from this body of Sin and Death! I know, O Lord, though I am weak and impotent, and of my ſelf unable to ſhake off the Chains and Fetters of my Luſts, yet thy Grace is abundantly ſufficient to reſcue and deliver me from them; and thou haſt promiſed to aſſiſt with it my honeſt Endeavours, and crown them with a bleſſed Succeſs. Wherefore for thy Truth and Mercies ſake ſuffer not thy poor Creature, who with pitiful and bemoaning Looks cries out for help to thee, to ſpend himſelf in weary and fruitleſs Struglings againſt this violent Torrent of my ſinful Nature, which without thy aid will quickly overcome my poor Endeavours, and drive me down into eternal Perdition. My ſole Dependence is upon thee, my Hope of Succeſs is wholly in thee; help, Lord, help, or elſe I periſh; ſtretch forth thy powerful Arm to my ſinking Soul, and let not this Deep ſwallow me up; but do thou ſo quicken my faint Endeavours, ſo ſtrengthen my weak and doubting Faith, ſo enliven my cold and languid Conſiderations, ſo clear up my Convictions of my need of a Saviour and of the

the Danger and Odiousness of my Sins, and thereby so increase my penitential Sorrows and Remorses, as that by all these means together my obstinate Will may at last be conquered, and effectually perswaded to part with every Sin, be it never so dear to me, and to comply with every Duty, be it never so cross to my vile Inclination. Then shall I freely resign up my self unto thee, and with a firm Resolution devote all my Powers to thy Service. And that I may do so, and by so doing be reconciled to thee, O my offended God, before I go hence and be no more seen, receive me, I beseech thee, into thy protection this Night, that I may yet see the light of another Day, and have a longer space to finish my Repentance. All which I humbly implore even for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose name and words I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

If upon searching your own Heart, you find that after you have fairly represented to your self what sinful Pleasures you must part with, what Duties you must submit to, and what Difficulties you must ingage with, you are willing without any Reserve or Exception to submit your self to God, beware you be not too hasty to form your *Resolution*, but take some little time to try your self; see whether you will continue to morrow of the same mind you are in now, and if then you perceive you have reason to suspect your self; try a little longer, and at the present indeavour as much as in you lies to confirm and settle your self in the good Mind you are in, by pressing and urging your self with all those Arguments of your Religion by which you have been thus far convinced and perswa-

deed; and while you are thus trying your ſelf; inſtead of the former, let this be your *Evening Prayer.*

O Bleſſed Lord and moſt merciful Father, thou art a God hearing Prayer, and to thee ſhall all fleſh come; I admire thy Goodneſs, I adore thy Grace, that after ſo many heinous provocations I have given thee, for which thou mighteſt have juſtly ſhut thine ears againſt me for ever, thou haſt heard my Cries and pitied my Miſery, and thus far contributed towards my Recovery. I acknowledge 'tis by thy Grace that I am what I am, that this ſtubborn Heart begins at laſt to relent, this perverſe Will to bow and ſtoop, theſe lewd Affections to hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs; that now at laſt my fooliſh ſoul is perſuaded to part with thoſe ſins which are its Plagues and Infelicities, and to embrace thoſe bleſſed Duties by which thou haſt deſigned to raiſe me to immortal Glory. By theſe good Beginnings thou haſt given me ſome Reaſon to hope for a happy Succeſs upon my poor Endeavours. Praiſed be thy Grace, I am at preſent heartily willing to be thine, and were I but ſure to continue thus minded and diſpoſed, I would immediately make over my Heart and Will to thee by the moſt ſolemn Engagement. But, O Lord, I am afraid of my ſelf, I dread my own Inconſtancy, and thou knoweſt I have too much Reaſon for it. I have mocked thee too often already with my deceitful Promiſes and Engagements; I have ſin'd & then promiſed Amendment, I have promiſed Amendment and then ſin'd again, as if all that I meant by my Promiſes, were only to ask leave of thee to ſin againſt thee anew: And now after ſo many Falſifications I would not for all the

the World deal treacherously with thee any more; wherefore before I solemnly resign and devote my self to thee by a new Purpose and Engagement, I desire to make some farther Trial of my own Stedfastness, to see whether this present Inclination of my Will be the effect of Passion or a setled Judgement. In the mean time therefore I do most humbly beseech thee to be present with me in all my ways, and continually to influence my Mind with thy Grace and Spirit; to strengthen my Faith, to fix my Consideration, to persuade my Will, and feed and cherish these my holy Desires with good Thoughts and Inspirations, that so I may remain stedfast and immovable, and no Temptation whatsoever may be able to alter the Temper of my mind, or divert it from its good Inclination; and that having had a sufficient Experience of the fixed Disposition of my Soul to obey thee, I may devote my self to thee with a chearful Heart, and an assured Hope of my own Sincerity and Constancy. O Lord hear and help me for thy Mercies sake, and for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose most perfect Form of Prayer I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

If after a sufficient Trial of your self, you find you are constantly inclined to submit to God, to part with every Sin, and comply with every Duty, consider that now it is high time for you to devote your self to God, and what abundant Reason you have for it, and what a powerful Obligation you must lay upon your self by so doing; and when you have seriously considered these things, give up your self to God in this following *Form of Prayer*; which for the greater *Sanction* and more awful *Solemnity* of

your good Resolution, you would do well to repeat at the next *Sacrament.*

O *Most merciful Father, so infinite is the Goodness of thy Nature, that thou art always ready to pity and relieve the poor and needy, and to extend thy timely Succours to us helpless Sinners whensoever we cry unto thee. Of the truth whereof thou hast given me, who am the vilest of Sinners, a most sensible Proof and Experiment. For not long ago I was so dead in Trespasses and Sins, that hadst not thou took pity upon me, and quickned me by thy Grace, I had died for ever; my understanding was so blind that I saw not my Danger, my Conscience so sear'd that I felt not my Guilt, my Will so inslaved to my Lusts that I could not indure to think of parting with them; but now, blessed be thy Grace which first excited my Endeavours, and hath hitherto prospered them, I do not only see the Danger my Sins have exposed me to, and sensibly feel the Guilt of them, but am freely willing to renounce them for ever, and to part even with those darling Lusts that have heretofore been as dear to me as my right Eye. And now, O Lord, I am come before thee, and I hope with a truly Loyal and sincere Heart, to offer up my Soul and Body to thee, and vow an everlasting Obedience to thy blessed Will. For Jesus sake refuse not this poor Oblation, which though it be infinitely unworthy of thine Acceptance, is the best thing I am able to present thee. To thee, O glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I do from henceforth eternally devote my self and all my Faculties.* [* And here at the Table of my blessed Saviour, and upon these sacred

* When you renew your Vow in the Sacrament, add,

ſacred Memorials of his Wounds and Bloud] *I utterly abjure all known and wilful Sins and Rebellions, and particularly, all ſuch as have been heretofore moſt dear to me; faithfully promiſing by thy gracious Aſſiſtance from henceforth to obſerve thy Law without any Reſerve or Exception. This in the Sincerity of my Soul I do here vow to thy Divine Majeſty, and however I may be hereafter tempted, I will never wilfully depart from it, or from any Part of it; ſo help me, O my God, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake, in whoſe own words I farther pray, Our Father,* &c.

Directions for the more profitable Exerciſe of our Private Religion *in the ſtate of our* actual Engagement *in the* Chriſtian Life.

When you go into your Cloſet in the *Morning*, conſider ſeriouſly with your ſelf the ſolemn Engagement you lie under; what a crying guilt it would be to violate it, what Madneſs and Folly to recede from it, after you have taken ſo much pains to reduce your ſelf to it, what mighty Reaſons you have to perſiſt in it, and what powerful Aſſiſtance is promiſed you, if you be not wanting to your ſelf; and then offer up this following *Prayer.*

O *Eternal God, who art the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and doſt through him beſtow ſo many good and perfect Gifts upon thy Creatures, I deſire for ever to remember and adore thy Goodneſs towards me, whom thou haſt ſnatched as a Firebrand out of*

the Fire, and at length reduced to a ſerious Purpoſe of Amendment after a long and obſtinate courſe of Diſobedience, in which if I had ſtill perſiſted I muſt have periſhed everlaſtingly. O bleſſed be thy great Name, that after ſo many years Rebellion againſt thee, for which I have long ago deſerved to be baniſhed into utter Darkneſs, I do yet behold the light of another Day, and am allowed a farther Space to repent and execute my purpoſe of Amendment. And now, O Lord, as thou haſt wrought my Will into a good Reſolution in deſpite of all the corrupt Inclinations of my Nature, leave not, I beſeech thee, thy Workmanſhip unfiniſhed, but by the mighty Operation of thy Grace excite and enable me faithfully to perform what I have ſo ſeriouſly reſolved. It is a mighty Work that I have undertaken, to cleanſe a baſe polluted Nature, and root up all its filthy Luſts and Affections, and plant it with all the heavenly Diſpoſitions, and improve them into everlaſting Happineſs, and thou knoweſt what ſtrong Oppoſitions will be made againſt me, and with what powerful Temptations I muſt ſtruggle throughout the whole Courſe of my future Endeavour. So that unleſs thou wilt ſtill go along with me, and ſtill quicken and animate me by thy bleſſed Spirit, my Work is ſo great, and my Strength ſo little, that it will be in vain for me to proceed any farther. Theſe importunate Temptations that ſurround me will quickly conquer my preſent Reſolution, and I ſhall do, as I have too often done already, reſolve and ſin, and ſin and reſolve, and ſo increaſe my Guilt by the Treachery of my Vows and engagements. Wherefore for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake, withdraw not thy ſelf from me, but continue to aſſiſt my weak Endeavours by thy powerful Grace, till thou haſt crown'd them with a

perfect

perfect Victory. For which End, I beseech thee, inspire me more and more with Patience and Constancy of Mind, that I may stand fast in my good Resolution in despite of all Temptations to the contrary. Suggest to my Mind those holy Examples thou hast set before me, especially that of my blessed Saviour, and incline my Heart to copy and imitate them. Direct me to some wise and faithful Guide, that may be willing and able to assist me in all my spiritual Necessities; and by frequently exciting me to dedicate my Actions to thee, do thou purifie my Intentions from sinful and from carnal Aims, that so I may always live to thy Glory. And since thou art present with me where-ever I am, and dost always behold me whatsoever I am doing, O do thou inspire me with such a strong continual and actual Sense of it, as may be a constant Check to my sinful Inclinations, and render me afraid of offending thee. Let thy blessed Spirit be my constant Monitor, to put me in mind to consider my Ways, and frequently to examine my Actions, that so whenever I go astray I may be immediately convinced of it, and by my speedy Repentance recover my self before I have wandered too far from my Duty. And grant, I beseech thee, that the sense of my past failings may still render me more watchful and circumspect for the future; that whensoever I have been carelesly or wilfully faulty, I may from thenceforth be more cautious of my Actions, and more vigilant against the Temptations that betrayed me. And that I may not run my self unnecessarily into Temptation for the future, preserve me, O Lord, from sloth and idleness, and from intermedling with matters that do not belong to me, and do thou still put me in mind to do my own Business, and to be faithful and diligent in the State and Calling

wherein thou hast placed me. And that I may always serve thee with Freedom and Alacrity, remove from me I beseech thee all unprofitable Sadness and Melancholy, and help me to acquire an equal Tranquillity of Mind, and a becoming chearfulness of Spirit. For which end, Good Lord, do thou inspire me with a lively Sense and earnest Expectation of that blissful State towards which I am travelling; that having this glorious Prospect always in my Eye, I may go on with Joy, and Triumph over all the Difficulties and Temptations that oppose me. And that by all these means I may be more and more strengthened and confirmed in the good Resolution I have made, do thou stir up my slothful mind to a diligent Attendance on thy publick Ordinances, that so in the solemn Assemblies of thy Saints I may constantly hear thy Word with Reverence and Attention, offer up my Prayers with Fervency and Devotion, and approach thy Table with all that Humility and Love, Gratitude and Resignation of Soul that becomes this solemn Remembrance and Representation of my dying Saviour. In these things, and whatsoever else is needful to secure my Resolution of Obedience, assist me, O Lord, for Jesus Christ his sake, to whom with thy self and eternal Spirit be render'd all Honour, Glory and Power from this time forth for evermore.

After this Prayer bethink your self a little what Temptations you are like to meet with in the ensuing Business of the Day, and briefly recollect those powerful Arguments which the Gospel urges to fortifie you against them, and apply them particularly to the Sin or Sins you are most inclined to, and then renew your

your Resolution to God in the following *Prayer.*

O God, who art my Hope and Strength, upon whose Aid and Assistance I depend, look down I beseech thee upon a poor helpless Creature, who am going forth into a busie World, that is full of Snares and Temptations. Blessed be thy Name, my Heart continues still resolved upon a through Course of Amendment; and therefore here in thy dreadful Presence I do again most solemnly promise and ingage my self, that whatsoever Temptations I meet with this Day, I will not wilfully commit any Sin, no not the Sin I am most inclined to; nor omit any Duty, how contrary soever it may be to my Nature; and that I will faithfully indeavour to keep such a constant Guard upon my self, as that I may not be surprized and overtaken through my own inadvertence and unwarineſs. But this, O Lord, I promise not out of any Confidence in my own Strength, but in Dependence upon thee, and in Hope that out of thy tender Pity to a poor impotent Wretch thou wilt not be wanting to me in any necessary Assistance, but that either thou wilt remove from me all great and importunate Temptations, or inable me by thy Grace to repel and vanquish them; and this I do most earnestly beseech, in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ, with whose Prayer I conclude this my morning Sacrifice, Our Father, &c.

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In the *Evening* when you find your ſelf beſt diſpoſed for religious Exerciſe, ſet apart ſuch Portions of your Time as you can conveniently ſpare from your neceſſary Refreſhment and Diverſion, to call your ſelf to Account concerning the Actions of the Day; and enquire whether they have been agreeable to your Morning Promiſe and Reſolution; and upon Enquiry you will find either that you have *faithfully diſcharged* what you promiſed, or that you have ſinned *unawares*, or through *Careleſneſs* and *Self-neglect*, or that you have ſinned *wilfully* and againſt your own *Conſcience*.

If upon Enquiry it appear that you have been *faithful* to your Morning Engagement, repreſent to your ſelf the great Reaſon you have to rejoyce in it, and to praiſe God for it, and then offer up this following *Thanksgiving*.

BLeſſed be thy Name, O moſt gracious and merciful Father, for thoſe great and numberleſs Favours which from time to time thou haſt heaped upon me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all thy Mercies; particularly, for the ſignal Mercies of this Day, for that thou haſt not ſhut thine Ears againſt my Prayers, nor withdrawn thy ſelf from me, but haſt accompanied me with thy Grace through all thoſe Snares and Temptations to which I have been expoſed. Praiſed be thy Name, that thou haſt not ſuffered me to be tempted above what I was able, that thou haſt ſo powerfully aſſiſted me againſt thoſe Temptations I have been engaged with, and by putting ſo many good Thoughts into my Mind, haſt ſtrengthened my Reſo-

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lution and rendered it so successful and victorious. 'Tis to thy Grace that I owe all the good I have done, and 'tis by thy Aid that I have escaped all the evils I have been tempted to; wherefore not unto me, O Lord, not unto my Strength or Endeavours, but unto thy Name be all the Glory and Praise of this days Deliverance and Preservation. O never let the Remembrance of this thy Goodness towards me depart from my Mind, but let it kindle in me such a grateful Sense, as may more and more incite me to love and obey thee, and depend upon thee for the future. And as thou hast been pleased to conduct me safely by thy Grace through all the Dangers and Temptations of the Day, so do thou take me into thy Care and Protection this Night, and grant that I may awake in the Morning with a Heart so inflamed with the Remembrance of thy Goodness, and so incouraged with this Days success, and so indeared to the Practice of Vertue by the growing Delights and Pleasures of it, as that I may persist in my religious Course with greater Courage and Alacrity; and this I humbly beg for Jesus Christs sake, in whose name and words I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

If upon Enquiry you find that you have been failing in your Duty, or that you have done any evil Action through meer *Heedlesness* or *Surprize*, indeavour to affect your self with a sorrowful Sense of your own Folly, Weakness, and Carelesness, and then conclude with this *Form of Humiliation.*

O Most blessed Lord God, who art infinitely glorious in thy own Righteousness and Holiness, and dost

doſt for ever will and act according to thy own Nature, which is the moſt perfect Law and Pattern of Goodneſs. To thy ſpotleſs Nature no evil can approach, who art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity; with what Confidence then can ſuch a polluted Creature as I am appear in thy Preſence, how can I lift up my guilty Eyes to thy Throne, who to my paſt Rebellions, which have been more in number than the hairs on my Head, have thus added ſo many ſinful Failings and Defects, that, ſhouldeſt thou be ſevere to mark what I do amiſs, were ſufficient to kindle thy Diſpleaſure againſt me! 'Twas but this Morning that I ingaged my ſelf to thee, not only to abſtain from all wilful and deliberate Sins, but alſo to ſet a watch upon my Mouth and Actions that I might not offend thee unawares; but to my Shame I muſt acknowledge, I have been wofully careleſs and remiſs, having this day ſuffered my ſelf through my own Inadvertency to be ſurpriſed into ſuch Actions as nothing can render pitiable or excuſable in thy Sight but the miſerable Frailty and Weakneſs of my Nature, What ſhall I ſay unto thee, O thou Judge of all the Earth! I am guilty, I am guilty, and have nothing to plead for my ſelf but the Blood of Jeſus, that all-ſufficient Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. O Lord, I do earneſtly repent, and am heartily ſorry for theſe my Miſdoings, the Remembrance of them is grievous unto me, the burthen of them is intolerable; have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, moſt merciful Father, and for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake forgive me all that is paſt, and grant that the Senſe of theſe my Miſcarriages may render me more careful and vigilant for the future. And let thy bleſſed Spirit be always preſent with my Mind, to recollect my Diſtractions, and awake my Conſiderations, and warn me of my Dan-

Dangers, that I may no more be ſurprized by ſudden Temptations, nor hurried into evil Actions by unexpected Hopes or Fears; but do thou ſo ſubdue my lower Appetites to my Will, my Will to my Underſtanding, and my Underſtanding to thy Spirit, as that under his bleſſed Conduct I may for the future be prepared againſt all Temptations, and furniſhed to every good work. And now, O Lord, let not the Failings I have been guilty of this Day, deprive me of thy gracious Protection this Night, but grant that after a ſafe and comfortable Repoſe, I may awake in the Morning with ſuch a ſorrowful Senſe of them, as may for the future oblige me to be more watchful and reſolute againſt them. All which I beg for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake, with whoſe Prayer I conclude this my Evening Sacrifice, Our Father, &c.

If upon Enquiry it appear that you have committed any *wilful, deliberate* Sin, indeavour to affect your ſelf with Horror, Shame and Compunction for it, by repreſenting to your Conſcience the monſtrous Foulneſs and Ingratitude, the deep Malignity and deſperate Madneſs of your own Action; and then conclude with this *Form of particular Repentance.*

O *Thou moſt dreadful Majeſty of Heaven and Earth, who hateſt Iniquity, and haſt proclaimed from Heaven thy fierce Indignation againſt all Unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs of men, look down I beſeech thee upon me, a vile and guilty Wretch, who ſtand here arraigned at thy Tribunal by my own Conſcience, and am ſo confounded with the ſenſe of my Sin, and of thy juſt Diſpleaſure againſt me, that I tremble*

tremble to draw near unto thee, and yet I dare not ſtay from thee. I acknowledge my ſelf unworthy, infinitely unworthy, to come before thee, and am prompted by my own Horrour and Shame to hide my ſelf from thee, but yet I know I muſt come or I muſt periſh. And therefore here, O Lord, I caſt my ſelf at thy Feet, and if thou ſhalt think meet to tread upon me, and to ſpurn me from thy Preſence for ever, I muſt own that thou art juſt and righteous in all thy Ways. For thou haſt been wonderfully good beyond what I could modeſtly have wiſht, or am able to expreſs; thou tookeſt pity upon me when I was all wounded and polluted, and weltring in my Blood, when I was ſleeping ſecurely upon the Brink of Perdition, and had ſcarce any Senſe or Feeling of my Guilt and Miſery; in this woful plight didſt thou viſit my poor Soul, and with thy preventing Grace awake me to a ſenſe of my Danger, and effectually warn me to flee from the wrath to come. And now when thou hadſt brought me to my ſelf, and to a through Reſolution of Amendment, and my Soul was in a fair way of Recovery, like an ungrateful Wretch as I am, I have flown in the face of my Phyſician, I have abuſed his Goodneſs, and baffled his Grace, and wilfully and deliberately torn open my Wounds again. And this I have done moſt treacherouſly, as well as ungratefully, not only againſt all the Obligations of thy Goodneſs, but alſo againſt my own repeated Vows and Engagements. For 'twas but this Morning that I ſolemnly renewed to thee my Promiſe of Obedience, and therein vowed not to offend thee wilfully upon any Temptation whatſoever; but O vile Traytor that I am, both to thee and to my own Soul, I have

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by * *moſt baſe baſely falſified this my engagement; and this I did with the moſt unpardonable Circumſtance, even againſt the Diſſuaſions of thy Grace, the Checks of my Conſcience, and the faireſt Warnings of my Danger. Had I done it ignorantly, or unawares, or under a ſurprize, it had been pitiable; but, O my Guilt, my Guilt, 'twas knowingly, wilfully, baſely, and maliciouſly that I did this Evil in thy ſight; whereby I have forfeited my Soul, my Innocence and thy Love, and have got nothing in exchange but the Pleaſure of a Minute, and a laſting Shame and Repentance. O vile Wretch, O deſperate Fool that I am, what have I done? whither am I fallen! I have grieved thy Spirit, contemned thy Authority, trampled on thy Goodneſs, and wounded my own Conſcience, and by one baſe Act have thrown my ſelf headlong from all thoſe glorious Hopes whereunto thou haſt raiſed me. And now, O God, what can I ſay in my own behalf, my Sin being ſo great, my Folly ſo utterly inexcuſable! O I am aſhamed, I am aſhamed of my ſelf, I lament and abhor the Madneſs and Wickedneſs of my own Choice; and O that it were in my power to recal it! But woe is me it is paſt into Act, and by that Act my Innocence is already ſtained, my Soul forfeited, and it is no more in my Power to undo what I have done, than to recal the Hours of yeſterday. What then ſhall I do, or whither ſhall I turn my ſelf! 'Tis againſt thee, O Lord, againſt thee I have ſinned, and now I have none but thee to flee to. I have nothing of my own to plead in my own behalf, my Conſcience condemns me, and my Sin, my Sin, cries aloud againſt me, ſo that unleſs thou wilt be pleaſed to liſten to the interceding*

* Here name the ſinful Act you have committed.

Blood

Bloud of thy Son, and to conſult thine own Bowels and Compaſſions, and from thence to fetch Arguments of Mercy. I am undone for ever by my own Folly. Wherefore for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake, for thy own Goodneſs and Mercies ſake, have pity, have pity upon me, heal my Soul, for I have ſinned againſt thee; be merciful to my Sin, for it is great. Thou haſt promiſed to receive returning Sinners, to blot out their Iniquities, and to heal their Backſlidings. I deſire, O Lord, to return unto thee, I hate and renounce my Sin, and do here abhor my ſelf in Duſt and Aſhes before thee. Wherefore for thy Pity ſake, O try me this once more, and do not preſently caſt me away from thy Preſence, nor take thy holy Spirit from me, but reſtrain me by his Grace from all preſumptuous Sins, and ſuffer them not to have Dominion over me. And quicken me, O Lord, for thy Names ſake, that for the future I may watch more carefully, reſiſt more vigorouſly, and walk more circumſpectly than I have hitherto done. And that from henceforth I may be intirely devoted to thee, and ſerve thee without Interruption, do thou ſo confirm me by thy Grace in my holy Reſolution, as that I may chooſe rather to die than to offend thee any more. And now, O Lord, though by my Rebellion againſt thee this Day, I have rendred my ſelf moſt unworthy of thy Fatherly Care and Protection, yet I beſeech thee to watch over me this Night for good, and give me a ſafe Repoſe in the Arms of thy Providence, that I may have yet a farther Space to repent of mine Iniquity. And grant, I beſeech thee, that when I awake in the Morning, I may be warned by the woful Remembrance of this Days Fall, to take more Care of my Steps, and to ſhun or refuſe thoſe Snares and Temptations that lie

lie all a-round me. All which I do moſt humbly and earneſtly beg of thee, even for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake, in whoſe Name and words I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

Directions for the Exerciſe of our private Religion *in the ſtate of our* Progreſs *and* Improvement *in the* Chriſtian Life, *with* Forms *of* private Devotion *fitted for this State.*

When you enter into your Cloſet in the *Morning*, indeavour to affect your ſelf with Gratitude and Thankfulneſs to God for his Grace, by repreſenting to your ſelf the Danger and Miſery of that ſinful State out of which you are recovered, and the great Incapacity you were in to recover without his Aſſiſtance; and then make this *thankful Acknowledgment* to him,

O *Moſt gracious and moſt merciful Father, thou art a liberal Benefactor to thy Creation, a never-failing Friend to Mankind, and a moſt tender Lover of Souls, for whoſe everlaſting Welfare thou haſt been always conſulting, and haſt left no method of Love unattempted, to reſcue them from Sin and Miſery. O bleſſed, for ever bleſſed, be thy great Name for the Experience I have had of this thy fatherly Goodneſs. I am a Monument of thy Goodneſs, a living Inſtance and Wonder of thy Mercy, for me haſt thou quickned who was dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, and who had long ago periſhed in mine Iniquities,*

hadſt thou not been infinitely patient & long ſuffering. I had forfeited my Soul to thee, and thou mighteſt juſtly have cut me off, and given me my Portion with Hypocrites, and, conſidering how I provoked thee to it by my daily Rebellions, I cannot but admire thy Forbearance towards me. But that thou ſhouldeſt not only forbear me, but follow me with thy Kindneſs, and never ceaſe importuning me to return to my Duty and Happineſs till thou hadſt conquered me by thy Gracious Perſuaſions, O incomparable Love! O amazing Goodneſs! never to be ſufficiently admired and adored! Wherefore praiſed, for ever praiſed, be thy Grace which hath redeemed my Life from eternal Death, and my Soul from the nethermoſt Hell; which hath reſcued me from the Snare of the Devil, and the pernicious Bondage of my Luſts, and implanted in my Nature theſe heavenly Graces and Diſpoſitions, and hitherto improved and advanced them towards my eternal Happineſs. This, O my God, all this, I owe to thy free and undeſerved Goodneſs, that I that was dead am now alive, that I that was loſt am found, that I that was a ſlave to my Luſts am made free from Sin, and tranſlated into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, is purely the Effect of thy free Grace, and to be intirely aſcribed to thy all-powerful Goodneſs. Go on, O Lord, go on, I beſeech thee, and perfect thine own Work, that ſo the Glory of it may be for ever redounding to thee; and that as I have been hitherto a ſignal Inſtance of thy Goodneſs, ſo I may be an happy Inſtrument of thy Praiſe to eternal Ages. And grant, I beſeech thee, that the ſence of thy unſpeakable Kindneſs towards me, may ſo captivate my Soul and all my Faculties, as that I may be moſt intirely thine; as that my Reaſon and Will,

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my Fear and Hope, and Love and Desire may from henceforth be all resigned up to thee, and for ever devoted to the Honour and Worship of thy infinite Glories and Perfections; and this I most humbly beg for Jesus Christ his sake, to whom with thy self and thy eternal Spirit be rendred all Honour, Glory and Power from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

After this Thanksgiving, consider briefly with your self the indispensible Necessity of your Perseverance to the End, and how not only vain and fruitless, but also hurtful and mischievous to you all your past Labour in Religion will be without it; and then conclude your Morning Devotion with this *Prayer for Perseverance.*

O *God, who art unchangeably holy and blessed, who art the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, and dost never swerve or vary from the essential Goodness and Purity of thy own Nature, look down I beseech thee upon me, a fickle, weak, and mutable Creature, whom thou hast redeemed to thy self, and hitherto conducted by thy Grace and Spirit. Thou knowest, O Lord, the Weakness of my Nature, and how unable I am without thy Strength and Assistance to finish the Race which thou hast set before me; thou knowest what Temptations I must struggle with, and what Difficulties I must yet overcome, before I am seized of the blessed Prize I am contending for, wherefore since thou hast hitherto been my constant Support and Defence, forsake me not now for thy Names sake, but as thou hast begun a good Work*

in me, ſo I beſeech thee to finiſh and compleat it; to uphold my feeble Soul by thy free Spirit under all Temptations and Difficulties, that ſo by patient continuance in well-doing, I may ſeek for, and at loſt obtain, honour and glory, immortality and eternal life. For which end, O Lord, preſerve me from being over-confident of my own Abilities, and inſpire me with a holy Jealouſie of my ſelf, that whilſt I ſtand I may take heed leſt I fall. And if at any time I ſhould be ſo baſe and ſo unhappy, as to offend thee wilfully (which I beſeech thee to prevent for thy Mercy and Compaſſion ſake) O ſuffer me not to ſleep in my Sin, but recal me inſtantly by the Checks of my Conſcience, and the Convictions of thy Spirit, leſt while I add Sin to Sin, and one degree of Wickedneß to another, my Luſts ſhould regain their Dominion over me, and thou ſhouldeſt be angry with me, and reject me from thy Covenant for ever. And that I may every day ſerve thee more freely and ſtedfaſtly, wean me, I beſeech thee, more and more from thoſe Temptations to Sin that are round about me, and give me ſuch a true underſtanding of the nature of all the goods and Evils of this World, as that neither the Flatteries of the one, nor the Terrors of the other, may ever be able to withdraw me from my Duty. And leſt while I am mortifying my old Sins, I ſhould careleſly permit new ones to ſpring up in my Nature, good God, do thou mind me to ſearch and try my own Heart, and take a ſevere account even of the ſmalleſt Defects & Imperfections within me; that ſo I may correct and reform them in time, before they are improved into inveterate Habits. And grant that I may be alway ſo ſenſible of my own Imperfection, as that I may never reſt in any preſent Attainment, but may ſtill be preſſing forward to the mark of my high calling in

Jeſus

Jesus Christ. Suggest to me, I beseech thee, frequent Thoughts of my Mortality, that so, while I have Time and Opportunity, I may be preparing for my Departure hence, and making provision for a dying hour. In order whereunto assist me, O Lord, I beseech thee, strictly to examine and review my past sinful Courses, that so if there be any remains of Guilt abiding upon my Conscience, I may purge them away by proper Acts of Repentance, before I go hence and be no more seen. And grant that as I have formerly abounded in Sin, so I may now redeem that precious Time I have lost, by abounding in the contrary Vertues, that so, as far as in me lies, I may revoke and undo the multitude of my past Sins, by doing all the Good I am able for the future. And that I may hold out and persevere to the end, preserve and continue me in the Communion of thy Church, and suffer me not to be led away by the errors of the wicked, and to fall from my own stedfastness. And finally, I beseech thee to grant that in the use of these blessed Means, I may so far prevail over the Infirmities and Corruptions of my Nature, as that at last I may have a clear and certain Feeling of my own Integrity and Uprightness towards thee; that so being from thence assured of thy Love, and of my Title to eternal Happiness, I may run the ways of thy Commandments more chearfully, and at last finish my Course with unspeakable joy. And now, O Lord, I resign my self to thee, take me, I beseech thee, into thy Care and Protection this Day, preserve me from all Evil, but especially from Sin, and quicken me by thy Spirit unto every good work; that so I may serve thee with a free and chearful Mind, and make it my meat and drink to do thy blessed will. All which I humbly beg for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose Name and Mediation I farther pray, Our Father, &c.

In the *Evening*, when you enter into your Cloſet, conſider what is the preſent Frame and Temper of your Mine; and upon Enquiry you will perceive, either that through the preſent *Prevalency* of your *corrupt Nature*, you are *averſe* to divine Offices, or that through *bodily infirmity*, you are *indiſpoſed* to them, or that through *Worldly-mindedneſs* and *Vanity of Spirit* you are *cold* and apt to be *diſtracted* in them, or laſtly, that your *Heart* is very much *enlarged*, and your *Mind* and *Affections* vigorouſly *diſpoſed* towards divine and heavenly things.

If upon Enquiry you find that through the preſent *Prevalency* of your *corrupt Nature* you are *averſe* to divine Offices, indeavour to affect your ſelf with Shame and Sorrow for it, by repreſenting to your Mind the great Impiety and Baſeneſs, the monſtrous Folly and Ingratitude of this your preſent Temper, and then offer up this following *Prayer*.

O *My moſt gracious God, and moſt kind and merciful Father, thou art the beſt Friend I have in all the World, and haſt ſhewn a thouſand times more Love to me than ever I ſhewed to my ſelf; but after all the vaſt and moſt indearing Obligations thou haſt laid upon me, this vile and ungrateful Heart of mine ſtill retains ſome Dregs of its antient Enmity againſt thee. Had I but the common Senſe and Ingenuity of a Man in me, how could I think of thee without Raptures of Love; how could I draw near unto thee without Tranſports of Delight and Complacency! But, vile and ungrateful that I am, I can think of all thy Good-*

Goodneſs with cold and frozen Affections, and can come into thy Preſence not only with Indifference but Reluctancy. Good God, what am I made of! what an inſenſible Soul do I carry about me! O I am aſhamed of my ſelf, I am confounded with the ſenſe of my own Baſeneſs; and yet, woe is me, I cannot help it. I ſtrive to ſhake off this Clog of my corrupt Nature, but ſtill it hangs upon me, and ſinks and weighs down my Soul as oft as 'tis aſpiring towards thee. 'O my God, have pity upon me, deliver me from this Body of Sin, eaſe my weary and heavy laden Soul of this grievous Burthen under which it labours and groans, and ſuffer not this ſpark of divine Life which thou haſt kindled in me to be oppreſt and extinguiſht by it; but ſo cheriſh it, I beſeech thee, with the continual Influences of thy Grace, as that at length it may break through all this Rubbiſh that ſuppreſſes it, and finally riſe into a glorious Flame. Then ſhall I always approach thee with Joy, and breath up my Soul to thee in every Prayer; then ſhall my heart be firmly united to thee in a devout and chearful Affection, and my Prayers ſhall come up as Incenſe before thee, and breath a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour into thy Noſtrils. Hear me therefore, O my God, I beſeech thee, and ſtrengthen me with all might in the inward man, that for the future I may contend more vigorouſly and ſucceſſfully againſt theſe vile Inclinations of my Nature which do ſo miſerably hamper and depreſs my Soul, that ſo at laſt I may be a conquerer and more than a conquerour through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, Amen.

If through any *bodily Infirmity*, ſuch as *Melancholy*, *Wearineſs*, *Drouſineſs*, or *Sickneſs* you find your ſelf *indiſpoſed* to divine Offices, indeavour to

quicken your ſluggiſh Mind with the Conſideration of ſome one of the moſt moving Argument of your Religion, ſuch as the Love of God and of your Saviour, the Majeſty of Gods Preſence in which you are, or the bleſſed Immortality you hope for; and then addreſs your ſelf to God in this following *Prayer.*

O *Bleſſed God, thou art a moſt pure and active Spirit, who doſt always move with an uncontroulable Freedom, and art never hindred or wearied in thy Operations; have pity upon me, I beſeech thee, thy poor infirm Creature, who am cumbred with this Body of death, and ſo depreſt by its manifold Frailties, that I cannot lift up my Heart unto thee. Thou knoweſt, O Lord, my ſpirit is willing though my fleſh is weak; my labouring Soul aſpires towards thee, it ſtretches forth the Wings of its Deſires toward thee, and would fain mount up above all earthly things, and unite it ſelf with thee in eternal Love; but alas! its Fervours are dampt, and its Endeavours tired by this clog of Fleſh that hangs upon it, and perpetually ſinks and weighs it down again. O my God, draw near unto me, and touch my Mind with ſuch a powerful ſenſe of thee, as in deſpight of theſe my bodily Indiſpoſitions may attract and draw up my Soul unto thee. And if it be thy bleſſed will, releaſe me from theſe fleſhly Incumbrances, and fit my Body to my Mind, that I may ſerve thee, as I deſire to do with a fervent and a chearful Spirit. But if it ſhall ſeem good in thine Eyes to leave me ſtruggling under theſe bodily Oppreſſions, Lord give me Patience and Submiſſion to thy heavenly Will; that ſo when I cannot approach thee with that Pleaſure and Satisfaction I deſire, I may be heartily content to ſerve thee upon*

upon any Terms, and that what I want of Vigour and Chearfulneſs in my Religion, I may make up in Truth and in Reality. And O let the Senſe of theſe my preſent Indiſpoſitions cauſe me more vehemently to long after that free and bleſſed State, wherein with fixt and ſteady Thoughts, with flagrant Love and an entire Devotion of Soul, I ſhall for ever worſhip, praiſe, and glorifie thy Name, Amen.

If through preſent *Worldly-mindedneſs*, or *Vanity of Spirit*, you find your ſelf *cold* and apt to be diſtracted in your Religious Offices, indeavour to ſtir up your Affections by repreſenting to your ſelf the Greatneſs and Urgency of your ſpiritual Wants, the Vanity of all outward things, and the Reality and Fulneſs of heavenly Enjoyments. And do what you can to recollect your wandring Thoughts, by ſetting your ſelf in the Preſence of the Great God, to whoſe All-ſeeing Eye every Thought and Motion of your Soul is open and naked. And when by thus doing, you have compoſed your Mind into a more ſerious Frame, preſent this following *Prayer*.

O *Thou ever bleſſed Majeſty, who filleſt Heaven and Earth with thy Preſence, and art always liſtening to the Supplications of a world of Creatures that hang upon thee, open, I beſeech thee, thine Ears of Mercy to me, who am unfit and unworthy to approach thee; why by ſetting my Affections upon things below, and plunging my ſelf into the Cares and Pleaſures of this Life, have eſtranged and alienated my mind from thee, and loſt that delightful Reliſh of thee, with which I was wont to draw near unto thee. And now that I*

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am retired from the World to converse with thee, and spread my wants and my desires before thee, those worldly cares and Delights with which I have been too too conversant, are importunately thrusting themselves upon me, to divert my Thoughts, distract my Intentions, and carry away my Affections from thee; by reason whereof my Mind wanders, my Hope droops, and my Desires are frozen, and whilst I am drawing near thee with my Lips, my Heart is running away from thee. O my God have pity upon me, pluck my Soul out of this deep mire, quicken, raise and spiritualize these my groveling Affections. Possess this Heart, which opens it self to thy gracious Influences, with such a strong and vigorous love to thee, as may lift me up above all earthly things, & continually carry forth my Soul in vehement Desires after thee; that so I may always approach thee with a Joyful Heart, being glad to leave the company of all other things to go to thee, my God, my exceeding Joy. Give me a sober, diligent, and collected spirit, that is neither choaked with Cares, nor scattered with Levity, nor discomposed with Passion, nor estranged from thee with sinful Prejudice or Inadvertency; but fix it fast to thy self with the indissoluble Bands of an active Love and pregnant Devotion; that so when-ever I prostrate my self before thee, I may presently be born away far above all these sensible Goods in a high Admiration of thee, and a passionate Longing after thee. And now, O Lord, while I am addressing to thee, gather in, I beseech thee, my wandring thoughts, and fix and stay them upon thy self. And O do thou touch my cold and earthy desires with an out-stretched Ray from thy self, and cause them to rise and flame up to thee in Fervours answerable to my pressing Wants, that I may so ask as that I may receive, so seek as that I may find,

so

so knock as that it may be opened unto me, through Jesus Christ my blessed Lord and Redeemer, Amen.

If after this you find your *Heart* is very much *enlarged*, and your *Mind* and *Affections* vigorously *disposed* towards God and heavenly things, fix your Mind a little while upon the Beauty and Excellency of his Nature, or upon some of the most affecting Instances of his Love, or upon the blessed State above, and then go on with this following *Prayer.*

O Thou most excellent Being, thou infinitely amiable and adorable Majesty, thou pattern of Beauty, and Standard of Goodness, who art glorious beyond all Praise, and dost out-reach all Wonder, and comprehend all perfection; blessed be thy name, thou hast touched my soul with a lively sense of thy Glory; I feel it shining through me, & like an active flame insinuating into my Heart; it fires my Love, cherishes my Hope, wings my Devotion, and diffuses a vital warmth over all my Faculties; it raises me up into a heavenly State, and fills me with joy unspeakable and full of glory; it captivates every thought in Obedience to thy Will, and brings every Power of my Soul into Subjection to thee. Blessed be thy Name, thou hast conquered me by thy Love, & I resign my self to thee with a chearful heart. I am intirely thine, I am thy Servant, truly I am thy Servant, and in this Title I glory more than in all the Honours of the World. But though I am highly advanced and exalted by serving thee, yet thou art so infinitely happy in the boundless perfections of thy own Nature, that thou canst reap no other advantage from it but only the pleasure of seeing thy poor Creature bless'd and

and made happy by it. What then ſhall I render unto thee, O thou Joy of my Life, thou treaſure of my Love, thou ſupreme Felicity of my Nature! Alas, I have nothing but my ſelf to give thee, nothing but this poor Heart, that burns with Love to thee, that pants and breaths after thee, and deſires above all things in the world to be eternally united to thee in perfect Love. If I had ten thouſand Hearts to love thee, ten thouſand Tongues to praiſe thee, I would devote them all to thee, as freely and chearfully as I do my ſelf. For whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides thee. O God, thou art my God, and my Portion for ever. In thee I am bleſt, and in the Light of thy Countenance I rejoyce more than in all the Joys and Pleaſures of the World. I am raviſht with thy Beauty, I admire thy Love, and from the bottom of my Soul adore thy Wiſdom and Goodneſs. My heart is ready, O Lord, my heart is ready, I will ſing and give praiſe. Awake up my Glory, awake all the Powers of my Soul, I my ſelf will awake and celebrate thy praiſes. Praiſed be the God of Glory, praiſed be the God of Love, praiſed be the Father of Mercies, praiſed be the beſt Friend of Souls, for thy Goodneſs reaches to the heavens, thy Glory ſhines throughout the Creation, and thy Mercy is ſpread over all thy works. Who can comprehend thine infinite Beauties, who can rehearſe thy noble acts, who can ſhew forth all thy Praiſe! I do confeſs my Thoughts are infinitely too ſhort, my Affections too narrow, my Expreſſions too ſcanty, to comprehend and ſufficiently admire and celebrate thy Glory. But, O my God, thou knoweſt that I love thee, and, bleſſed be thy Name, I feel infinite reaſon ſo to do. O that I could love thee more, that I could love thee but as much as Angels and glorified Spirits do, who yet

cannot

cannot love thee as much as thou deſerveſt, becauſe thou deſerveſt to be beloved infinitely. But my Soul thirſts for thee, and longs after thee. O when ſhall I be admitted into thy bleſſed Preſence, there to ſee and admire, and love, and adore thee for ever! when ſhall I ſhake off this Clog of ſinful Mortality, that ſinks and depreſſes me, and flee to thoſe happy Regions of perfect Love, where I ſhall continually feed upon thee with inexpreſſible delight, and be filled with a ſtrong and everlaſting Senſe of thy Goodneſs, O thou that art the beginner and finiſher of every good work, be pleaſed to aſſiſt my holy Endeavours to withdraw my mind more and more from theſe ſenſible things, that it may have a clearer ſight of its heavenly Country from whence it came, and whither it deſires to return; that ſo having my Eye always fixt on that bleſſed recompence of reward, I may live above this World, and in deſpight of all its Terrors and Allurements, perſevere to the end in a ſteady and even courſe of Obedience. And now, O Lord, ſince thou haſt been graciouſly pleaſed to inſpire my mind with theſe delightful Thoughts of thee, and to enlarge my Heart with ſuch ſweet Tranſports of Love to thee; grant, I beſeech thee, that they may not only pleaſe, but better me; that they may lift me up above all the Temptations of this World, and revive my Strength, and quicken my Endeavours, and compoſe my diſtruſtful Heart into a ſtedfaſt Dependance upon thee, that ſo I may be fruitful in all good works, and my heart may be eſtabliſht unblameable in holineſs before thee, unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus. Amen, Amen.

After

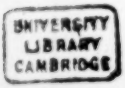
After you have uſed one or more of the foregoing Prayers, according as they ſuit with the preſent Temper of your Mind, take a ſhort view of your Defects and Imperfections, and eſpecially of thoſe that cleave moſt to your Nature; and briefly repreſent to your Mind the intrinſic Evil and Vileneſs of them, and how they clog your Religion, blemiſh your Nature, and obſtruct your Happineſs, and then conclude with the following *Prayer for growth in Grace.*

O *God who art the moſt excellent Nature, the Perfection of all Beauty, and the Fountain of all Graces, who doſt infallibly underſtand what is beſt to be choſen, and invariably chuſe by the beſt and pureſt Reaſon; look down, I beſeech thee, upon me thy poor defective Creature, who am aſhamed of my ſelf to ſee how unlike thee I am; how I am laden with Imperfections, and how after all my religious Endeavours, my Nature is ſtill vitiated with unreaſonable Luſts and Affections; how much Vanity and Impertinence there yet remains in my Mind, how much Perverſeneſs in my Will, how much ſpiritual and carnal Iniquity in my Affections and Appetites. Lord, I have been long a contending with this corrupt Nature, and yet upon all Occaſions I find my ſelf too too prone to be* *. *Woe is me, even my faireſt Graces have their Spots and Blemiſhes, my pureſt Diſpoſitions their ſinful intermixtures, and my beſt Works their Flaws and Imperfections. O my God, have pity upon me, who here lie ſighing at thy Feet, under a miſerable diſeaſed Nature; and as thou haſt begun the bleſſed Cure in me, ſo for Chriſt his ſake*

* Here name the particular Infirmities that ſtick cloſeſt to your Nature.

sake I beseech thee to compleat it; that being intirely recovered, and raised up unto newness of Life, I may, in the perfect Health and Vigour of my Soul, serve and glorifie thee for ever. For which end, I beseech thee confirm me more and more in the belief of those immortal Pleasures beyond the Grave, which thou hast treasur'd up for those that love and obey thee; that by the strength of a lively Faith, and vigorous Hope, my Soul may be rais'd above this World, and learn to despise and trample upon all its gilded Vanities, whensoever they present themselves either to allure or to terrifie me from pursuing the heavenly Enjoyments. Excite in me such a vehement Thirst after those Rivers of Pleasures above, as may every day render me more cool and indifferent towards earthly things, more contented and satisfied under all the Events and Issues of thy Providence, and more active and vigorous in my heavenly Calling. And I beseech thee to inspire me with such clear and lively Apprehensions of thy essential Beauties and Perfections, and of thy bountiful Love and boundless Benevolence to all thy Creatures, as may every day more and more raise and improve my Love to thee; that this being the great Spring and Principle of all my Actions, may continually excite me to a chearful Obedience to thy Will, and a vigorous Imitation of thy Perfections. O cause me to love thee for thy self, and Religion for thee, and the Instruments of Religion in order to thy Glory and my own Happiness; that so founding my Content upon thee, and the blessed Interests of a virtuous Life, I may grow in Grace, and be rich in good Works, and go on with a satisfied and triumphant Spirit from imperfection to Strength, from Acts to Habits, and from Habits to Confirmation in Grace; and

may

may be ſtill more and more confirmed in all the heavenly Graces, till they are finally conſummated into everlaſting Glory. And when, by thy Grace and Aſſiſtance, I have perfectly conquered the corrupt Nature within, and the Temptations without me, and am arrived into the State of everlaſting Triumph, I will lay all my Victories at thy Feet, and with Palms in my hand, and Hallellujahs on my Lips, celebrate thy praiſes to Eternity. Hear me, O my God, in this and what ever elſe thou knoweſt to be needful for me, even for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake, in whoſe Name and Words I further pray, Our Father, &c.

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